



One step at a time

Diabetes and foot health

Diabetic foot care is a daily commitment

Having diabetes is an everyday challenge. Controlling your blood sugar levels not only benefits your overall health but can also impact your legs and feet. Learn how diabetes can affect your feet and ways to care for them.



Nerve damage can cause numbness, tingling and pain in your feet. Damage to the nerves makes it harder to feel pressure, pain and sensitivity to heat and cold.



Poor circulation causes the blood vessels in your legs to harden and become narrow. This reduces the amount of blood flow to your feet. Poor circulation makes it harder for a sore to heal.

These two problems often work together to cause even more trouble. Nerve damage may keep you from knowing you have a sore on your foot that could become infected. Poor circulation can then make it harder for the infected sore to heal.

Health tip:

Check your feet daily and keep all appointments with your health care provider.

Ways to keep your feet healthy

Good foot care is an important part of diabetes management and prevention. Early detection and proper treatment are the best ways to minimize complications. Below are some helpful tips on how to keep your feet healthy.

- **Control your blood sugar levels** to help prevent nerve damage, poor circulation and infection. Ask your provider about your target blood sugar levels.
- **Wash your feet daily**, but avoid extremely hot water. Use your elbow to test the water temperature.
- **Dry your feet well**, paying special attention to the spaces between your toes.
- **Check your feet for injuries**, including cuts, sores, blisters, redness or calluses. Use a mirror or ask someone to help if you are not able to do it alone.
- **Use lotion** on clean, dry feet and allow it to absorb completely. Avoid putting lotion between your toes.
- **Always wear slippers or shoes** to protect your feet. Wear well-fitting shoes and always wear socks or stockings to avoid blisters.
- **Feel the inside of your shoes** with your hand before putting them on to be sure there are no sharp edges or objects that could hurt your feet.



Protect your feet. Ask for a foot check-up.

Be sure your provider checks your feet for the following during your next diabetes health care visit:

- Blisters.
- Cracked skin.
- Ulcers.
- Nerve issues.
- Poor circulation.
- Toenail care.

Talk to your provider about caring for your feet or ask about being referred to a podiatrist or foot clinic.