

# **General Foot Health Advice for People with Diabetes**

Podiatry Department



## Diabetes

Diabetes is a condition that can cause long term health problems such as

- **Loss of feeling in the feet.**
- **Poor blood supply to the feet.**
- **Slower healing.**

**To avoid these long term problems the most important factor is good control of your blood sugar levels.**

## Hygiene

- Good hygiene is important to prevent infection.
- Wash your feet daily in warm soapy water (Always check the temperature of the water first)
- Do not soak your feet for longer than 5 minutes.
- Dry feet well but gently, especially between and under the toes.

## Foot Care

- Look at your feet carefully every day for any changes such as;  
cuts, swellings, redness or discolouration as you may not have felt any change.
- Minor cuts and scratches may be rinsed with tap water and covered with a sterile dressing.
- If there is swelling, redness, throbbing, pain or pus present consult your Podiatrist, GP or Practice Nurse.
- Avoid walking barefoot
- Avoid extremes of temperature like; hot baths, being close to fires or radiators, hot water bottles.

## Nail and Skin Care

- Cut toenails following the shape of the toes, not too short and never cut down the sides of nails.
- File nails to avoid ragged edges.

- If skin is moist, dry the area well and apply a light dusting of talcum powder.
- If skin is dry, use a moisturizing cream daily but not between the toes. If you have callous/corns consult a podiatrist.
- Never use sharp instruments or corn plasters as this may lead to infection or ulceration.

## Socks & Tights

Should be;

- Well fitting.
- Without holes, rough seams or tight elastic.
- Changed daily.

## Footwear

A good shoe should support and protect your foot, and allow natural movement during walking.

Poorly fitting shoes can cause many problems, such as corns, callous and ingrown toenails.

Shoes should;

- **Fit well.** (Go to a shop that will measure and fit your shoes correctly)
- Have laces, buckles or Velcro straps to hold the foot in place.
- Have rounded toes
- Be inspected daily. (Feel inside with your hands for ridges or sharp points and check that nothing has fallen inside)
- New shoes should be worn for short periods only in order to avoid blisters and chaffing.

### **Things to consider when choosing shoes:**

- Match the shape and size of the shoe to your foot.
- Many people have one foot larger than the other. Buy shoes to fit the larger foot. There should be 1cm (just less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch) of room in the length of the shoe.
- If your feet swell, make sure that you buy shoes later on in the day so you know they

will accommodate the swelling. Make sure that the shoe has laces or straps than can be adjusted to fit your foot well at all times of the day.

- Wear shoes that are suited to the activity you are doing.
- If you wear orthoses (moulded insoles) make sure you take them with you when trying on shoes.
- Wear the type of sock you will be wearing with the style of shoe you are buying.

There are many reasons that people can have difficulty finding suitable shoes.

A podiatrist will be able to advise you on what type of footwear would be suitable for you.

## Contact Details

### **AHP Outpatients Services – Podiatry**

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