

# TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR DIABETES



## Healthy Feet

Did you know that diabetes can harm your feet and lead to complications? The good news is that you can take steps to help keep your feet healthy. You've already taken an important step by finding this guide!

### Tips to Keep Your Feet Healthy



#### ■ Check your feet every day.

- Look for calluses, cuts, sores, blisters, red spots, and swelling. A good time to check your feet is when you put on or take off your shoes and socks.
- Use a mirror to check the bottoms of your feet if you have trouble seeing them. You can also ask a family member to help you.
- Contact your health care provider if you see a problem.

#### ■ Wash your feet every day.

- Use warm water, not hot, to wash your feet. Do not soak your feet.
- Check bath water with your hands first to make sure it's not too hot. You might not feel how hot the water is with your feet.
- Dry your feet well, including between your toes.

#### ■ Keep the skin on your feet soft and smooth.

- Rub a thin coat of lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet.
- Do not put lotion between your toes. It could cause an infection.

#### ■ Protect your feet.

- Do not walk barefoot. It is easy to step on something and hurt your feet.
- Wear shoes that fit well and protect your feet.
- Check inside your shoes before you put them on to make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects in them.
- Always wear shoes at the beach and on hot pavement.
- Do not use hot water bottles or heating pads on your feet.
- Do not use over-the-counter products for corns and calluses. They may harm your skin.
- Keep your blood sugar within your target levels.
- Ask your primary care provider to check your feet at every visit.
- Have a podiatrist (a doctor who treats feet) examine your feet once a year or more.



**Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention**  
National Center for Chronic  
Disease Prevention and  
Health Promotion

## How Can Diabetes Harm Your Feet?

- Diabetes is a major cause of amputation of a toe, foot, or leg. Many amputations could be prevented with daily foot care.
- If you have diabetes, you can lose feeling in your feet. When that happens, it can be hard to tell when you have a problem—like a callus, cut, sore, or blister on your foot.
- Diabetes can reduce the amount of blood flow to your feet. Numbness and less blood flow can slow the time it takes for sores to heal and lead to foot problems.



## What Is a Podiatrist?

- A *podiatrist* (poh-DY-uh-trist) is a doctor who specializes in finding and treating foot and ankle problems. You should have a podiatrist check your feet once a year or more.

## What to Do When You Visit a Podiatrist

- Work with your podiatrist to create a plan to care for your feet.
- Ask how to trim your toenails and treat corns and calluses safely.
- Ask if you qualify for special shoes. They might be covered by Medicare or other insurance plans.
- Ask your podiatrist to send your exam results to your other doctors after every visit.
- Be sure to keep your next podiatrist appointment!

## Manage Your ABCs



Ask your health care team to help you set and reach goals to manage your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol and stop smoking—also known as the ABCs of diabetes.

- **A1C (a measure of your average blood sugar over 3 months):** The goal set for many people is less than 7% for this blood test, but your doctor might set a different goal for you.
- **Blood pressure:** High blood pressure causes heart disease. The goal is less than 140/90 mmHg for most people, but check with your doctor to see what your goal should be.

- **Cholesterol:** LDL or “bad” cholesterol builds up and clogs your blood vessels. HDL or “good” cholesterol helps remove the “bad” cholesterol from your blood vessels. Ask your doctor what your cholesterol numbers should be.
- **Smoking:** If you smoke or use other tobacco products, take steps to quit. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for support.

**Teach your family about your diabetes and the ABCs so they can help you.**

## Join the millions of Americans learning to manage their diabetes:

Ask your health care provider to refer you to diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services to help you manage your diabetes. Search for “[Find a Diabetes Education Program in Your Area](#)” to go to a website that lists programs recognized by the American Diabetes Association or accredited by the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists.

Visit [CDC's Diabetes website](#) for information on how to manage your diabetes and live your healthiest life.

