

Sweet Balance with Your Feet

A Guide for Patients in the Home

Foot Care for a Lifetime

- Diabetes causes 70,000 lower-extremity amputations each year (according to the CDC).
- “Proper foot care can reduce the risk of infection and amputation by as much as 85%.” (American Diabetes Association)

Follow these steps to help prevent serious foot problems:

- Keep your feet clean, dry and protected:
 - Check feet every day. Use a mirror to help see the bottoms of your feet.
 - Wash feet every day.
 - Dry feet well, especially between the toes.
 - Use lotion on feet to keep soft. Do not put lotion between toes.
 - Use talcum powder or cornstarch between toes to help keep dry.
 - Never go barefoot.
 - Check inside your shoes before wearing.
 - Wear shoes that fit well. (Have your feet measured.)
 - Wear shoes that protect feet. (Close-toed shoes are the best.)
 - Protect feet from extreme heat (e.g., hot bath water or water bottles, heating pads, radiators, open fires, sunburn).
 - Do not use a blow dryer to help dry feet.
 - Protect feet from extreme cold.
- Check your feet:
 - Daily check for cuts, sores, swelling, and red spots. Do not forget to check between your toes.
 - Contact your doctor early for any breaks in skin, color change, pain or numbness. Even athlete’s foot, blisters, and plantar warts can become infected.
- Keep your blood flowing to your legs and feet:
 - Do not cross your legs or feet.

ADVANCED HOME CARE

- Wiggle your toes and flex your ankles by moving your feet about 5 minutes 2-3 times every day.
- Do not wear tight socks, elastic or rubber bands or garters around your legs.
- Do not smoke. Smoking decreases blood flow to your feet.
- Ask your doctor to:
 - Check your sense of feeling and pulses in your feet at least once a year.
 - Trim any calluses or corns from your feet.
 - Refer you to a podiatrist (foot doctor) if needed.
- Reward to your feet:
 - Keep your blood sugars in your target range.
 - Be more active by following an approved exercise program from your therapist or doctor.

Footwear Facts

- Shop for shoes in the afternoon when your feet are largest.
- Buy shoes that have room for your toes to wiggle.
- Try on both shoes and buy for the bigger foot.
- Break in shoes slowly by wearing them for 1-2 hours a day at first.
- Never wear vinyl or plastic shoes because they do not stretch or “breathe”.
- Do not buy shoes with pointed toes or high heels. They put too much pressure on your toes.
- Athletic or walking shoes are good for daily wear.

