

How can you look after your feet?

1. Inspect your feet every day

Check for sores, ulcers, cuts, yellow/red spots and infected toenails.

2. Wash your feet every day

Warm water & Dry off well; be sure to wash & dry between the toes.

Apply thin layer of moisturizing cream to the tops and soles of feet, but NOT in-between toes.

3. Trim your toenails regularly

Ask the doctor to help you if you are struggling with thickened, yellow toenails.

4. Wear socks & shoes at all times

Inside and outside the house; this prevents cuts and sores. Women should avoid high-heeled shoes.

5. Protect your feet from heat and cold

Do not sit with your feet by a heater or fire. Do not sleep with a hot water bottle at your feet; rather use an extra blanket.

6. Promote blood circulation

Do not cross legs for long periods of time. Do not wear shoes/socks that leave red marks on your feet. Stop smoking! Wiggle your toes for 5 minutes, 2 – 3 times per day.

7. Be more active

When your heart pumps faster, blood flow to your feet is increased, and sores heal better. Walk around the block, work in the garden or dance to your favourite song on the radio.

Group Therapy

Weekly groups are held at the **OT department** at National Hospital, together with **Dietetics** and **Physiotherapy**, to provide people with Diabetes with the information to help them lead a normal, healthy, balanced life. Groups are held on **Wednesdays at 10:00 – 11:00**

Need Support / Information?

Please feel free to contact the occupational therapists.

Occupational Therapy
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Occupational Therapy and Diabetes



health

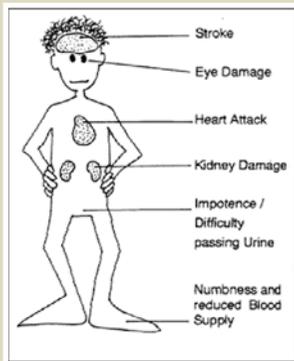
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What is Diabetes Mellitus?

Diabetes is a common condition in which the amount of glucose (sugar) in the blood is too high. This can happen when the body does not produce enough insulin or the insulin it produces is not working effectively. Insulin is the hormone needed to convert sugar (“blood glucose”) to energy and controls blood glucose levels.

What are the complications of Diabetes?



Diabetes is a disease in which high blood glucose levels over time can damage the nerves, kidneys, eyes, and blood vessels. Diabetes can also lead to decreases in the body's ability to fight infection. When diabetes is not well controlled, damage to the organs and impairment of the immune system is likely. Foot problems can develop and quickly become serious.

Why is it important to look after your feet if you have Diabetes?

With damage to the nervous system, a person with diabetes may not be able to feel his / her feet properly. Normal sweat secretion and oil production that lubricates the skin of the foot is impaired. These factors can lead to abnormal pressure on the skin, bones, and joints of the foot during walking and can lead to breakdown of the skin of the foot. Sores may develop.

Damage to blood vessels and impairment of the immune system from diabetes makes it difficult to heal these wounds. Bacterial infection of the skin, connective tissues, muscles, and bones can then occur. These infections can develop into gangrene. Because of the poor blood flow, antibiotics cannot get to the site of the infection easily. Often, the only treatment for this is amputation of the foot or leg.

What kind of foot problems can you experience?

- Loss of feeling in your feet
- Changes in the shape of your feet
- Foot ulcers or sores that do not heal
- Infected toenails
- Swelling
- Blisters
- Pain associated with wearing your shoes

What risk factors increase your chances of developing foot problems?

Footwear: Poorly fitting shoes are a common cause of diabetic foot problems. If you have common foot abnormalities such as flat feet or bunions, you may need prescription shoes or shoe inserts.

Nerve damage: The diabetic may not properly perceive minor injuries (such as cuts, scrapes or blisters). Normally, people can feel if there is a stone in their shoe and remove it immediately. A diabetic may not be able to perceive a stone. Its constant rubbing can easily create a sore.

Poor circulation: When there is not good blood flow to injured tissues, healing does not occur as well.

Trauma to the foot

Infections:

- Athlete's foot can lead to more serious bacterial infections and should be treated promptly.
- Ingrown toenails

Smoking: Smoking any form of tobacco causes damage to the small blood vessels in the feet and legs. This damage can disrupt the healing process and is a major risk factor for infections and amputations.