

Diabetes and foot care:

A patient's checklist



Many people with diabetes have problems with their feet. You can prevent serious problems by following these basic guidelines. Ask your doctor to explain your risk factors for foot problems.

DO...	DON'T...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check your feet every day for cuts, cracks, bruises, blisters, sores, infections or unusual markings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cut your own corns or calluses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet if you can't lift them up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> treat your own in-growing toenails or slivers with a razor or scissors. See your doctor or foot care specialist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> check the colour of your legs and feet; if there is swelling, warmth or redness, or if you have pain, see your doctor or foot care specialist right away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use over-the-counter medications to treat corns or warts. They are dangerous for people with diabetes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clean a cut or scratch with a mild soap and water and cover with a dry dressing for sensitive skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply heat to your feet with a hot water bottle or electric blanket. You could burn your feet without realizing it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> trim your nails straight across 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> soak your feet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wash and dry your feet every day, especially between the toes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> take very hot baths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apply a good skin lotion every day on your heels and soles. Wipe off any excess lotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use lotion between your toes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> change your socks every day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> walk barefoot inside or outside
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> always wear a good supportive shoe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear tight socks, garters or elastics, or knee highs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> always wear professionally fitted shoes from a reputable store. Professionally fitted orthotics may help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wear over-the-counter insoles—they can cause blisters if they are not right for your feet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> choose shoes with low heels (under 5 cm high) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sit for long periods of time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> buy shoes in the late afternoon (since your feet swell slightly by then) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> smoke
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoid extreme cold and heat (including the sun) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exercise regularly 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> see a foot care specialist if you need advice or treatment 	

Adapted with permission from: Casella A. Feeling well...diabetes and foot care, a patient's checklist. Knowing Diabetes. © Diabetes Hamilton, 2002.

Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our community-based network of supporters help us provide education and services to people living with diabetes, advocate for our cause, break ground towards a cure and translate research into practical applications.



*This document reflects the 2013 Canadian Diabetes Association Clinical Practice Guidelines.
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