



## How can you protect your feet?

1. Inspect your feet daily. Ask for help if you need it!
2. Check your footwear daily for wear or damage that may irritate your feet.
3. Wash your feet regularly. After they are dry, apply lotion (but avoid between the toes!).
4. Don't walk around in bare feet.
5. Quit smoking (talk to your health care provider).
6. Use proper tools to trim your toenails (no sharp scissors or knives).
7. Don't soak your feet for longer than 10 minutes.
8. Don't use harsh cleanser or detergent on feet.
9. Don't use over-the-counter products for removing corns.
10. Don't use hot water bottles or heating pads on your feet.

## When buying footwear...

- **Shop for shoes at the end of the day, when your feet are at their "largest".**
- **Shoes should be snug, but not tight. Make sure you can wiggle your toes.**
- **Choose shoes with a lower heel (less than 2 inches), and made of breathable material, like leather.**
- **Make sure they do not rub or pinch.**
- **Choose shoes that are supportive and have good shock absorption.**
- **Look for shoes with laces or Velcro.**



## DIABETES AND YOUR FEET



## Why does foot care matter?

High levels of sugar in the blood can increase risk of infection or damage nerves and blood vessels.

## Infections

High levels of glucose (sugar) in the blood affects the body's natural response to injury. Normally, the body's immune system would work to heal itself quickly. With diabetes, this process is slowed, and doesn't work as well, leading to increased risk of infection.

## Infection can look like:


- Redness
- Swelling
- Pain
- Warmth
- Pus
- Fever
- Rapid heart rate or breathing
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Vomiting

**Untreated infections can quickly progress and become serious.**

## Nerve damage

Also called **neuropathy**. This may feel like:

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Burning
- Pins and needles
- Pain



Nerve damage can cause decreased feeling in the feet. It can also lead to decrease in muscle size, weakness, or claw or hammer toes.

When you can't feel your feet, this puts you **at risk for injury and infection** – it prevents you from feeling when you have a cut, scrape, ingrown toenail or cracked skin.

## Circulation

People with diabetes are at higher risk of peripheral vascular disease (a disease affecting blood vessels in the arms and legs). Fatty plaque builds up in the walls of these arteries, which causes narrowing over time. This decreases blood flow to those areas.

Smoking makes this worse!

