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FOOT CARE AND DIABETES

DIABETES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO FOOT PROBLEMS IN TWO WAYS:

1. IT CAN CAUSE DECREASED FEELING IN THE FEET, SO THAT INJURIES SUCH AS CUTS AND SCRAPES MAY GO UNNOTICED.
2. IT CAN CAUSE DECREASED CIRCULATION TO THE FEET, RESULTING IN A REDUCED BLOOD SUPPLY THAT MAY BE INSUFFICIENT TO FIGHT INFECTION AND HEAL WOUNDS.

THE RISKS OF DEVELOPING FOOT PROBLEMS CAN BE GREATLY REDUCED IF YOU FOLLOW THE SIMPLE PRINCIPLES OF FOOT CARE OUTLINED HERE AND SEE YOUR PODIATRIST REGULARLY.

TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR FEET

WASH YOUR FEET EVERYDAY. USE WARM WATER, NOT HOT, AND A MILD SOAP. DON'T PUT YOUR FEET IN WATER WITHOUT TESTING IT FIRST WITH YOUR HAND, ELBOW OR A THERMOMETER. DON'T SOAK YOUR FEET UNLESS RECOMMENDED BY YOUR PODIATRIST.

PAT YOUR FEET DRY WITH A SOFT TOWEL, MAKING SURE TO DRY BETWEEN THE TOES. DO NOT RUB THE SKIN TOO VIGOROUSLY. IF YOUR SKIN IS DRY OR SHOWS EVIDENCE OF CRACKING, USE A MOISTURIZING CREAM AS PRESCRIBED AND DIRECTED BY YOUR PODIATRIST. NEVER PUT THE CREAM BETWEEN YOUR TOES. FOOT POWDER, USED SPARINGLY, CAN HELP IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH EXCESSIVE PERSPIRATION. CHANGE STOCKINGS DAILY. DON'T WEAR STOCKINGS THAT HAVE BEEN MENDED OR HAVE SEAMS; THESE CAN INJURE OR IRRITATE THE SKIN.



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SHOES

SHOES THAT FIT POORLY CAN CAUSE IRRITATION AND INJURY. SHOES SHOULD FIT SNUGLY BUT NOT TIGHTLY. MAKE SURE THERE IS PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOUR TOES. AVOID SHOES MADE OF PLASTICS; LEATHER SHOES THAT ALLOW YOUR FEET TO "BREATHE" ARE BEST. NEW SHOES SHOULD BE BROKEN-IN GRADUALLY.

INSPECT THE INSIDE OF YOUR SHOES DAILY FOR TORN LININGS OR FOREIGN OBJECTS. REMEMBER, DIABETICS SOMETIMES HAVE DECREASED SENSATION AND CAN BE UNAWARE OF SOMETHING INSIDE THE SHOE. WALKING OR RUNNING SHOES MAY BE HELPFUL FOR SOME DIABETICS. CONSULT YOUR PODIATRIST. IF YOU HAVE DEFORMED FEET, YOU MAY NEED SPECIAL THERAPEUTIC SHOES.

NEVER GO BAREFOOT. ALWAYS WEAR SHOES OR SLIPPERS, EVEN AT HOME, AND ESPECIALLY IN THE DARK. REMEMBER: AN UNNOTICED MINOR CUT, SCRAPE OR BURN, CAN RAPIDLY LEAD TO A SERIOUS INFECTION IN A PERSON WITH DIABETES.

TRIM YOUR TOENAILS CAREFULLY

BE CAREFUL TO AVOID INJURY WHEN YOU TRIM YOUR TOENAILS. TRIM THEM FREQUENTLY, STRAIGHT ACROSS, AND NOT TOO SHORT.

DO NOT DIG INTO THE CORNERS OF THE TOENAILS. USE A NAIL CLIPPER OR AN EMERY BOARD OR NAIL FILE. IT HELPS IF YOU SOFTEN YOUR NAILS BY SOAKING THEM IN WARM WATER FOR ABOUT TEN MINUTES BEFORE CUTTING THEM. IF NAILS ARE THICKENED AND DIFFICULT TO CUT, SEE YOUR PODIATRIST.

NO HOME SURGERY



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DON'T TRY TO REMOVE INGROWN TOENAILS. DON'T USE RAZOR BLADES, SCISSORS OR KNIVES TO REMOVE CALLOUSES OR CORNS. A MINOR CUT CAN RAPIDLY LEAD TO SERIOUS INFECTION. REMOVAL

OFA INGROWN TOENAIL SHOULD BE DONE BY YOUR PODIATRIST. HE CAN ALSO GIVE YOU INSTRUCTIONS ON THE USE OF EMERY BOARDS OR PUMICE STONES FOR REMOVING CALLOUSES AT HOME. EXTREMELY THICKENED CALLOUSES SHOULD BE REMOVED BY YOUR PODIATRIST.

WATCH OUT FOR BURNS

PEOPLE WITH DIABETES MAY HAVE A LOSS OF FEELING IN THEIR FEET AND SUFFER A BURN WITHOUT KNOWING IT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU CHECK THE TEMPERATURE OF HOT WATER BEFORE YOU PUT YOUR FEET IN IT. BATHWATER SHOULD BE LUKEWARM, BETWEEN 85 AND 90 DEGREES F. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A BATH THERMOMETER, TEST THE WATER WITH YOUR ELBOW.

DON'T USE HOT WATER BOTTLES OR HEATING PADS. CHECK WITH THE PODIATRIST ABOUT THE USE OF AN ELECTRIC BLANKET ON YOUR BED. WEAR SOCKS TO KEEP YOUR FEET WARM. WEAR PROTECTIVE FOOTWEAR AT THE BEACH OR AROUND SWIMMING POOLS. DO NOT USE CHEMICAL CORN OR CALLOUS REMOVERS; THEY CAN CAUSE CHEMICAL BURNS.

DON'T SMOKE

IF YOU SMOKE, STOP! SMOKING NARROWS THE BLOOD VESSELS AND DECREASES CIRCULATION TO THE FEET. SMOKING IS NOT WISE FOR ANYONE, AND PARTICULARLY DANGEROUS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES.

WARNING SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF DIABETIC FOOT PROBLEMS



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LOOK AT YOUR FEET EVERY DAY.

REMEMBER, ANY INJURY TO THE FOOT OR BREAK IN THE SKIN IS POTENTIALLY SERIOUS IN A PERSON WITH DIABETES. SO LOOK AT YOUR FEET EVERY DAY, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN THE TOES. IF POOR

VISION OR ARTHRITIS MAKES IT HARD FOR YOU TO DO THIS YOURSELF, HAVE SOMEONE LOOK AT YOUR FEET. NOTIFY YOUR PODIATRIST AT ONCE IF YOU SEE:

- PUNCTURE WOUNDS
- CUTS OR SCRAPES THAT DO NOT HEAL • INGROWN TOENAILS
- CORNS AND CALLOUSES
- PROBLEMS DUE TO POORLY FITTING SHOES
- ANY INJURIES TO THE FEET
- DISCOLORATION, PAIN, REDNESS OR SWELLING
- PAIN IN THE CALVES DURING WALKING OR EXERCISE