



FROM THE OFFICE OF DR.

Taking care of your feet

People with diabetes are at risk for foot problems. Diabetes can damage the nerves in the feet; this condition is called neuropathy. If neuropathy develops, you might not feel any injuries that happen to the feet and thus fail to take care of these injuries properly. Diabetes can also cause poor circulation—less blood flowing to the feet—making your body less able to fight infection and heal wounds in your feet.

The good news is that you can do many things to keep your feet healthy and free of injury:

Check your feet and toes every day for any cuts, sores, blisters, bruises, bumps, infections, or nail problems. Minor problems (a small cut or blister, for example) can be treated at home by washing the affected area with warm soap and water and applying an antibacterial cream. Never break a blister. Contact your doctor or foot care specialist if you find a more serious problem. Also call your doctor if:

- A minor problem does not improve within 1 day
- Pain or discomfort continues for more than 2 days
- Any pus forms on a sore or near it.

Wash and moisturize your feet every day, especially during winter. This will keep your skin from cracking and allowing germs to cause infection. Use warm water and a mild soap. When choosing a moisturizer, look for over-the-counter products such as Eucerin, Lubriderm, and Vaseline Intensive Care. Cream formulas may work better than lotions. Do not place moisturizer between your toes, which can encourage the growth of athlete's foot.



What **not** to wear—high heels and pointy toes put too much pressure on your feet

If you get athlete's foot, treat it with an over-the-counter medication. Some of these need to be applied two to three times a day. If you can't do this, ask your doctor whether a prescription medication that can be applied once a day is right for you. Stubborn infections may also require a prescription medication.

Cut your toenails straight across to help prevent ingrown toenails, which are painful and can become infected. Toenails are easiest to cut after a bath or shower. If your toenails are thick, let your doctor or foot care specialist trim them.

Wear comfortable shoes, to prevent corns and calluses. Do not wear new shoes for more than a few hours at a time.

Never walk barefoot—always wear shoes.

Have doctor examine your feet regularly.



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