FROM THE OFFICE OF **DR.**

Keeping your feet healthy

Foot hygeine

- Wash your feet daily with soap and water, making sure to dry them thoroughly, especially between toes.
- Change your socks daily.
- Change your shoes at least every other day, if possible.
- Powder shoes daily with an antifungal foot powder

Tips for adults and older patients

- If your feet are excessively dry, use a moisturizer to keep them moist.
- If your feet perspire excessively, use an antifungal powder to keep them dry.

Tips for patients with chronic diseases

- Inspect your feet daily for cuts, scrapes, abrasions, and blisters. These could be related to a chronic condition you may have, such as diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, or arthritis. Placing a mirror on the floor can make looking for these signs easier.
- Do not cut thickened toenails or thickened skin, such as corns and calluses. See your doctor or foot care specialist.
- Do not soak your feet in hot water.
- Call a primary care physician, podiatrist, or foot care specialist at the first sign of a problem, such as a cut that won't heal or any other problem that causes concern.

How to select footwear that fits

- Check the front of the shoe for at least a half inch of space between the longest toe (often the second toe) and the tip of the shoe. Do this at least monthly in young children.
- Find shoes that have a **toe box** (the front of the shoe) wide enough and high enough to accommodate all the toes comfortably; a firm **counter** (the part that grips the heel) that extends to the arch; an **arch support** strong enough to balance the foot during walking; a **sole** supportive and shock absorbent enough for hard, flat surfaces; and **uppers** made of breathable materials.
- Shoes should be large enough to fit with any orthotic device you may use.
- Shoes should fit the activity you use them for and should protect the feet from pressure and friction. Walking shoes or other athletic-style shoes often work well for general use.

Shoe shopping tips

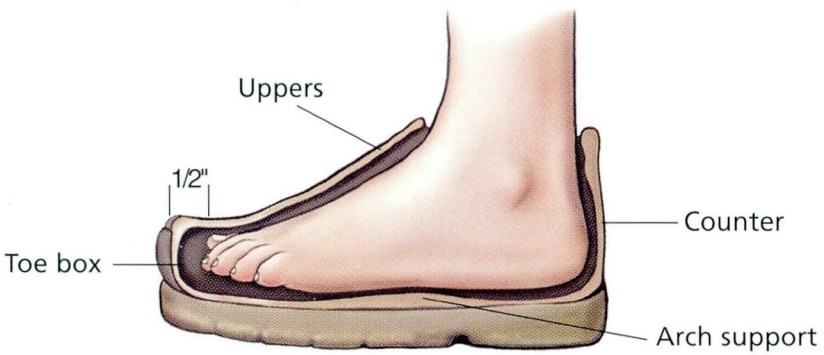
- The feet and ankles swell during the day. Shop for shoes later in the day.
- Have your feet measured each time you buy shoes. Also be aware that a size 10-D, for example, from one manufacturer may be a size 9 1/2-C from another, so always try on shoes before buying them.
- New shoes should fit comfortably in the store (snug but not tight). Don't buy shoes thinking they will stretch to fit.

Optional footwear

- If conventional shoes don't fit properly, consider extra-depth or custom-molded shoes. Diabetic patients can obtain shoes and multi-density inserts through the Medicare Diabetic Shoe Program (ask your doctor or foot care specialist)

Proper use of slippers

- Slippers do not have enough padding and support. Wear them only for the short walk from the bed to the bathroom.



For more information, see the Cleveland Clinic Department of Patient Education and Health information Web site, www.clevelandclinic.org/health.

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