

SecondsCount Treat Your Feet Checklist



If you have diabetes, PAD, or both, you can prevent serious foot problems, including the loss of a toe, foot, or leg to amputation by taking care of your feet every day.

Daily Foot Care Routine

- **Wash your feet each day.** Use warm water and mild soap. Dry gently but well, making sure to dry between your toes.
- Keep the skin on your feet supple and soft. Apply cream or lotion (that does not contain alcohol, which can be drying) over the tops and bottoms of your feet. Do not use between your toes.
- **Check your feet every day** for sores, cuts, breaks in the skin, red spots, swelling, corns, calluses and blisters, ingrain toe nails, dry skin, bumps and hot and cold spots. Use a mirror, or ask a friend, to help if you have trouble seeing the bottoms and sides of your feet.
- **Trim toenails** straight across and file the edges to prevent ingrown toenails. If you are not able to trim them because they are hard and thick, or for other reasons, ask your doctor to refer you to a foot care provider (podiatrist) who specializes in working with people with diabetes or other foot and leg problems.
- **If you find any problems with your feet, call your doctor.** Do not try to treat them yourself. Some foot care products can harm your skin and make your problems worse.

Protect Your Feet from Sores

- **Wear shoes and socks at all times, even indoors.** To avoid the possibility of sores or blisters, choose shoes that fit well and socks that are seamless or have flat or soft seams. Be sure to check for pebbles or rough edges in your shoes before putting them on. If you have lost feeling in your feet due to diabetes and PAD, you may not be able to feel if something is not right in your shoes.
- **Make sure your shoes fit properly.** You may need to work with a shoe expert to ensure that you have the correct size shoe if you have lost feeling in your feet. If you wear special

inserts for your shoes, take them along when you are being fitted to make sure there is ample room for your toes in your new shoes. Avoid blisters by breaking in new shoes gradually. Wear them for only a few hours a day at first.

- **Keep your feet warm – but not too warm.** Wear socks to bed if your feet are cold. Always wear shoes on hot pavement and at the beach. If you have diabetes, use your arm or hand – not your feet – to test the temperature of water. If you have lost feeling in your feet, you may not realize the water is too hot and you may be burned.
- **Keep blood flowing to your feet.** When sitting, put your feet up. Wiggle your feet and toes. Avoid crossing your legs for long periods. And quit smoking. Using cigarettes or other tobacco products causes the blood vessels to narrow reduces blood flow.
- **Be active.** Get moving and be active every day. Make sure to wear athletic shoes that fit well and provide good support. Walking, biking, swimming and dancing are good activities that are easy on the feet. Running, jumping and other activities that are hard on the feet are best avoided.

Ask for Foot Exams

- **Have your feet checked every time you visit your doctor.** If you have diabetes you should have a complete foot exam at least once a year and more often if you have foot problems. A complete foot examination includes looking at the skin, muscles and bones, checking the circulation, assessing how well you walk, and determining if you have numbness.