

The Importance of Skin and Foot Care

Diabetes can take a toll on your overall health, including the health of your skin and feet.

When you have diabetes, blood glucose, a form of sugar, builds up in the bloodstream.

Over time, high blood glucose can cause long-term health problems like neuropathy, also called nerve damage, and poor circulation; both directly affecting the health of your skin and feet.

Your nerves allow you to move and feel. Damage to your nerves may cause: tingling, pain, burning, numbness, reduced sweating, reduced feeling, and muscle weakness in your feet and legs.

Over time, this muscle weakness makes you walk differently which can cause the shape of your foot to change, and eventually cause damage like calluses, bunions and hammertoes.

Poor circulation means the blood flow to your legs and feet is reduced, most likely because of plaque build-up inside your vessels.

Poor circulation can cause pain, cramping, and less hair growth. Your legs and feet can also look bluish. If you get a cut or sore, poor circulation can slow healing.

Together, neuropathy and poor circulation increase the chances that a small injury like a cut, sore or blister will become a serious health problem. Neuropathy may cause your skin to dry and crack. Poor circulation slows healing increasing your risk of infection.

You may not notice even a small wound, and, if it is not treated properly, it can lead to gangrene and eventually, amputation of a toe, foot or leg.

But there is good news. By keeping your blood glucose in a healthy range, you can prevent or delay neuropathy and poor circulation and as a result, prevent skin and foot problems.

You can reach healthy blood glucose control by making healthy food choices, getting physical activity, checking your blood glucose on a regular basis, and taking medications, if necessary.

Work with your diabetes care team to reach your blood glucose goals in order to protect your skin and feet.

Although Diabetes is complex, it's manageable when you have the right information and support. Diabetes Care and Education Specialists are trained to be your diabetes expert and can help you learn how to successfully thrive with diabetes. You deserve nothing less!

Ask your provider for a referral today! Find one at www.DiabetesEducator.org/find.