

Protecting Your Feet

When you have diabetes, it is important you do all you can to protect your feet.

With each step you take, your body weight is supported by different parts of your feet; creating pressure points.

Normally, these pressure points are in your heel, the ball of your foot (right below the toes) and your big toe.

However, our feet change over time. The way we walk, our weight, weak muscles, the types of shoes we wear and our health, may cause our feet to adapt to the demands we put on them. To protect your feet, choose footwear that allows for these changes.

“You don’t want shoes that are very flimsy and can be folded in half. They don’t have any support in them for you.”

Select a shoe that supports your entire foot, is wide enough to relieve pressure, and gives your foot plenty of room. Leather and athletic shoes are good choices.

Choose a shoe that has: a heel of 1 to 1 and a half inches or lower; a soft, absorbent liner; a toe box that extends a half inch beyond the end of your toes; and a heel compartment snug enough to prevent rubbing.

Cushioned inserts, designed specifically for your foot shape can help as well.

Buy your shoes in the afternoon to ensure a proper fit. Feet swell during the day so if you buy shoes in the morning, by evening, they may be too tight.

Have your feet measured each time you buy new shoes and always try on both shoes before you make a purchase.

Break in new shoes gradually to avoid blisters.

If you have trouble finding shoes that are comfortable and protect your feet, ask your diabetes care team for help.

You may need to see a Podiatrist; a foot and ankle specialist; who can prescribe a specific shoe for you, especially if you have hammer toes, bunions, corns or are flat-footed.

Or your Podiatrist may prescribe a visit to a Pedorthist; a footwear specialist, who can select or create a shoe specifically to fit the shape of your foot.

“And what they do is they pour plaster inside of it and make a mold of your feet and then they build the shoe around your foot.”

Check with your insurance company; some footwear may be covered by your plan.

When selecting proper footwear, don’t forget about your socks. Socks play an important role in protecting your feet.

Wear a fresh pair of properly-fitting socks every day. Choose ones that keep their shape, absorb and draw moisture away from your skin (some labels may say ‘wick’), and don’t have tight fitting elastic bands or seams inside.

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White or light-colored socks are good choices because they allow you to quickly see any blood or fluid from skin damage.

Wear appropriate footwear in every situation. Do not go barefoot, or in socks, even inside your house. Slippers may be appropriate at times, but they too should cover and protect your entire foot.

In public showers, always wear shower shoes.

And at the pool or the beach, wear water shoes.

To reduce the risk of developing an ingrown toenail or having a jagged nail that can cut your skin, keep your toenails trimmed.

Trim your toenails straight across to help avoid ingrown toenails.

Use the shape of your toe as a guide. Smooth any rough edges with an emery board. If you have difficulty seeing your toes, reaching them, or keeping your hands steady enough to trim them, ask someone to do it for you.

If you enjoy pedicures, only go to salons that are clean and hygienic. Take your own nail tool kit with you and ask them to put a tub liner in before soaking your feet.

Protecting your feet each day and in every situation, will help prevent damage.

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.