

Protecting Your Skin

Your skin is the largest organ in your body and your main defense against infection. But to do its job, your skin needs to be healthy. While you work to protect your feet and overall health, it is important you also protect your skin.

When you have diabetes, high blood glucose can cause your skin to dry and crack, making you more at risk for infection.

People with diabetes may also be at higher risk for: rashes, boils and the growth of some bacteria and fungi.

To prevent breaks in your skin and infection, keep your blood glucose in a healthy range. Make healthy food choices and drink plenty of fluids to keep your skin hydrated from the inside. Keep your skin clean. And always protect it from damage.

When showering or bathing, check the water with your elbow before getting in, to make sure it's not hot enough to burn you. Nerve damage in your feet due to neuropathy, may not allow you to feel very hot water.

Use a mild soap, with warm, not hot, water and pat your skin dry with a towel. Do not rub it.

If you moisturize with a lotion or cream, choose one that doesn't contain alcohol because alcohol tends to take moisture away from the skin.

"You just need to moisturize your skin from top to bottom. You just need to make sure your skin don't be dry and brittle because it can cause cracks and sores and become infected."

Do not put the lotion between your toes. This warm, moist area is nice place for bacteria to grow and usually does not need the extra moisture anyway.

The best time to apply moisturizer is right after your bath or shower. This way, your lotion can lock in the moisture your body has already absorbed. And making it a part of your daily routine will help you remember to use the lotion.

Protect your skin from damage like sunburn.

"Some people are good at wine, some people are good with cars, I got sunscreen."

Always wear appropriate sunscreen, clothing with built-in SPF, and find a place in the shade. And don't forget to apply the sunscreen to your feet; they can burn too.

"It does have an expiration date so it's important to buy fresh. And why not?"

Use insect repellent when needed. If you do get an insect bite, try not to scratch it.

There are several products available that can take the itch out of your bite and protect your skin.

Together, these steps can help keep your skin healthy and able to protect you from infection.

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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.