

## How to Care for Your Feet

Foot problems in diabetes may be caused by:

### Persistent, high blood sugar levels can:

1. Make it hard for small sores to heal & can create a place for infection to settle in.
2. Cause nerve damage – you may not feel things hurting your feet such as hot water, stones, slivers, etc.
3. Cause narrowed blood vessels in your feet – this decreases the blood supply which makes it harder for sores to heal.

You must take care of your feet if you have diabetes. Here are some helpful tips:



### DO:

- ✓ Use warm water – **not hot** – to wash your feet
- ✓ Make sure you dry your entire foot after you wash – remember **between your toes!**
- ✓ Wear shoes or slippers **at all times to prevent stones or sharp objects from cutting your feet.** Make sure your shoes fit well & are not too big
- ✓ **Always wear socks or pantyhose with your shoes.** Do not wear socks with holes or big lumpy seams
- ✓ **Use moisturizer** to prevent your skin from becoming dry & cracked
- ✓ **Check your feet daily** for blisters, cracks, sores or colour changes
- ✓ **Use a mirror** to see the bottom of your feet
- ✓ Always wear shoes that fit well
- ✓ Cut your nails straight across & not too short
- ✓ Ask for help if you need it

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### DO NOT:

- x **Soak your feet.** Your feet may not be able to tell if the water is too hot & you may burn your feet
- x **Use corn remedies or other chemical products** as these products may burn the skin on your feet
- x **Wear tight socks or knee highs** as they may slow down the blood supply to your feet
- x **Cut callouses** - see your doctor

### CHECK YOUR FEET DAILY

These are signs of problems...

- **Red**, warm or hard areas – infection or injury may be just under the skin
- **Blisters** – something is rubbing the spot – check your shoes and socks to prevent further injury
- **Cracks** – use moisturizer to help heal
- **Callouses** – changes may be going on under the callous
- **Rash** – red, itchy areas between toes or on feet

If any of these problems do not heal quickly, see your doctor.

**The following need immediate assessment by a health professional:**

- **White or blue (dusky) or black & cold** areas are signs of poor or no blood supply

Make sure you take your shoes & socks off at your doctor's office to remind your doctor to check your feet each visit.

### BUY SHOES THAT FIT PROPERLY:

- **Shop for shoes in the evening** when your feet are largest
- Try the shoes on **with your thickest socks**
- Shoes should fit well when you buy them – **do not expect the shoe to stretch**
- **A well supported, rubber soled walking shoe** is best
- Choose shoes that have a wide, deep toe box with ½" space at end of toe & shoe.

### GETTING SPECIALIZED HELP FOR YOUR FEET:

If you have any additional problems such as corns, thick toe nails, or callouses you should see a foot care specialist.

For a list of foot care specialists, contact your nearest Huron Perth Diabetes Program.