

## INFORMATION PRESCRIPTION

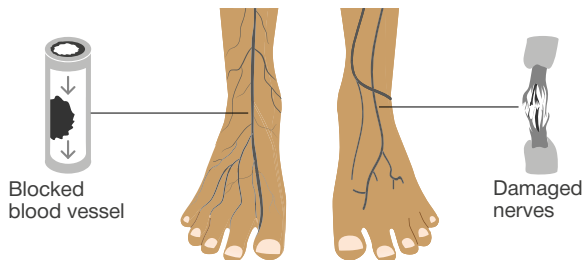
# Diabetes and your feet

Your foot risk is: **Low**      **Moderate**      **High**

People with diabetes have an increased risk of developing serious foot problems, including ulcers and infections that could lead to amputations. You can reduce this risk if you have regular foot checks with a health professional and take good care of your feet.

### What to know about your feet and diabetes

- Diabetes can damage the nerves in your feet, which can cause a loss of feeling in them.
- Having diabetes may reduce blood flow to your feet.
- High blood glucose (sugar) levels increase the risk of delayed wound healing and infection.



### Signs you may have a foot problem

Damage to nerves or reduced blood flow can cause numbness, burning, dull ache or changes in the skin. If this happens, see your GP or podiatrist. However, if you develop changes in the shape, colour or temperature of your foot, or notice a wound, see your GP urgently.

### How to keep your feet healthy

Get to know what is normal for your feet. Remember, if you lose feeling in your feet, you might not be able to feel serious damage.

It is very important to have regular foot checks with a health professional – usually a doctor, podiatrist or credentialed diabetes educator (CDE).

**Low-risk feet:** every 6 to 12 months

**Moderate-risk feet:** every 3 to 6 months

**High-risk feet:** every 1 to 3 months

A GP Management Plan can help with the cost.

### Stop smoking

Smoking makes it harder for blood to flow around your body. For help quitting, ask about your local quit smoking service or call the Quitline on **13 7848**.

### Look after your diabetes

Talk to your health professional about your latest blood glucose, cholesterol, and blood pressure results and decide on personal targets.

Visit the NDSS website, [ndss.com.au](http://ndss.com.au), for more information and resources on looking after your diabetes.

### Eat a healthy balanced diet and be active

Lifestyle changes can help manage your diabetes. Some activities can increase the risk to your feet, so discuss ways to get active with your health professional, or ask your GP for a referral to see an exercise physiologist.

**Look after your feet**

Check your feet daily. Use a mirror or ask for help if you have trouble checking your feet.

Look after toenails – not too short or long. Cut your nails straight across and gently file any sharp edges.

Wear shoes and socks that do not rub – get your feet measured to check your shoes are the right fit.

**How to check your feet**

- Take off your shoes and socks.
- Feel the temperature of your feet - do they feel the same? Are they hotter or colder than usual?
- Look for skin changes and unexplained injuries on your toes and feet.
- Check between your toes for any damage.

**Safety note**

**Contact your GP urgently** if you notice broken skin, cuts, or blisters that do not heal, colour changes, new pain, or a red, hot, swollen toe or foot. These can become serious problems very quickly and need urgent medical attention.

**My next steps**

Discuss with your diabetes health professional two actions you are going to focus on (think about what, where, when and how):

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Health professional: \_\_\_\_\_

Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The NDSS and you**

Whether you have just been diagnosed with diabetes, or have been living with diabetes for a while, the NDSS provides a range of support services, information, and subsidised products to help you manage your diabetes, stay healthy and live well. For access to more resources (including translated versions), or to find out more about support services, go to [ndss.com.au](https://www.ndss.com.au) or call the NDSS Helpline on **1800 637 700**.

This information is intended as a guide only. It should not replace individual medical advice and if you have any concerns about your health or further questions, you should contact your health professional.