

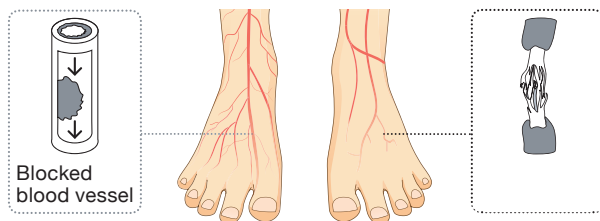
Diabetes and your feet – Low Information Prescription

Your foot risk is: **Low**

People with diabetes are at higher 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 you should know about your feet and diabetes?

- Diabetes can damage the nerves and you may lose feeling in your feet.
- Having diabetes may result in reduced blood flow to your feet.
- High blood glucose (sugar) levels increase the risk of delayed wound healing and infection.



When do you have a foot problem?

The damage to nerves or 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 feet or notice a wound you did not know was there, **ask for an urgent GP appointment**. Have a foot check every 6-12 months. Ask about a GP management plan to help with the cost.

How do you 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 damage – no pain is not a sign that it is not serious. See the next column for ways to keep your feet healthy.

Smoking

- Get advice about how to quit. Smoking makes it harder for blood to flow around your body. Call Quitline on **137848**.

Look after your diabetes

- Talk to your health care team about your latest blood glucose (sugar), cholesterol and blood pressure results and decide on personal targets.
- Check the NDSS website, ndss.com.au for fact sheets and online programs. Ask about local programs you can attend.

The Integrated Diabetes Foot Care Pathway is a tool that provides nationally consistent guidelines for health professionals footforward.org.au.

Eat a healthy balanced diet and stay active

- Lifestyle changes could help manage your diabetes. Some activities can increase the risk to your feet, so discuss new ways to get active with your health care team.

Look after your feet

- Check your feet daily or ask for help if you can't.
- Look after toe nails – 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 the fit of shoes.

How to check your feet?

- Take off shoes and socks.
- Feel the temperature of your feet – are both the same? Are they hotter or colder than usual?
- Look for changes in skin and unexplained injuries.
- Look at your toes – checking for damage between your toes and that your nails aren't too long.
- It may be tricky to see all of your foot – ask for help or use a mirror.

My next steps

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

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

Name: _____ Health professional: _____ Review date: _____

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