

Diabetes and your feet – moderate or high

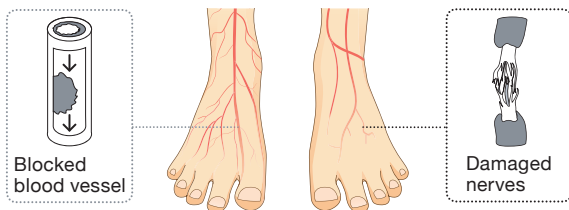
Information Prescription

Your foot risk is: Moderate High

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 or notice a wound, see your GP urgently.

How do you keep your feet healthy?

Get to know what's normal for your feet. Remember, if you lose feeling in your feet, you might not be able to feel serious damage. See the next column for ways to keep your feet healthy. It is very important to have regular foot checks with a health professional – usually a doctor, podiatrist or credentialed diabetes educator (CDE). **High** 1-3 months, **Moderate** 3-6 months.

A GP management plan can help with the cost.

Smoking

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

Look after your diabetes

- Keep your blood glucose (sugar), cholesterol, and blood pressure within target range. Talk with your health care team about your latest results and what your personal targets should be.
- Check the NDSS website, ndss.com.au for fact sheets and education 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.
- It may be tricky to see all your foot – ask for help or use a mirror.
- 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 the fit of shoes.

Safety note

Check your feet every day for broken skin, cuts or blisters that don't heal; red, hot, swollen foot or toe; colour changes; new pain.

If you notice any of these changes, contact your GP **urgently** as these can become serious problems very quickly.

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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