

Keeping Feet Healthy and Happy

by [the National Diabetes Education Program](#)



Healthy feet are happy feet. Keeping feet healthy is essential for people with diabetes—and the reason why setting aside a moment each day to take care of your feet is so important. People with diabetes need to work with their health care team to keep their blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol as close to normal as possible. Doing so may help prevent or delay diabetes-related foot, eye, kidney, and heart problems.

To avoid serious foot problems that may lead to toe, foot, and leg amputations, ask your doctor to plan a daily activity program that is right for you. Have your doctor check the sense of feeling and pulses in your feet at least once a year. Diabetes can make feet numb and you may not feel an injury. Pay special attention to any loss of feeling in your feet, changes in the shape of your feet, and foot ulcers or sores that do not heal.

To care for their feet, people with diabetes need to:

- **Check for sores, cuts, or bruises.** Call your doctor if healing does not begin after one day.
- **Wash your feet in warm water and dry well between your toes.**
- **Keep your feet soft and smooth by rubbing lotion on the tops and bottoms of them.**
- **Ask your doctor or podiatrist about the best way to take care of corns or calluses.**
- **Wiggle your toes and move your ankles for five minutes, two or three times a day.** This helps with blood flow.
- **Keep toenails trimmed weekly and ask your health care team for help if you can't see or reach them.**
- **Wear athletic or walking shoes that fit well.** Make sure they are comfortable from the start and have enough room for your toes.
- **Never walk barefoot – not even indoors.**

Medicare covers foot care if you have nerve damage in either foot due to diabetes. It allows a foot exam every six months by a podiatrist or other foot care specialist. You do not need a doctor's prescription for this exam.

For a free copy of [Take Care of Your Feet for a Lifetime](#), contact the National Diabetes Education Program at <http://www.ndep.nih.gov> or 1-800-438-5383.

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