

Tiptoe Foot Care

Do not do the following things:

Don't ignore any problems with your feet that you are not sure about. If there is a distinct colour change, any swelling, pain, heat or other abnormality seek professional help immediately.

- **Do not** use razor blades or sharp implements to remove hard skin as this could lead to an infection.
- **Do not** use corn plasters as these may contain acid which is harmful to your skin.
- **Do not** wear badly fitting shoes or walk barefoot.
- **Do not** wash your feet in strong disinfectants.

In the event of an emergency

First aid: If a minor injury occurs on your foot, cleanse with warm salt water, dry the foot carefully with a soft clean towel without touching the actual wound and cover with a dry dressing.

If for any reason, there are problems in contacting us, please telephone your GP immediately.

CONTACT US TODAY TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

East Barnet Clinic

19 Longmore Avenue,
East Barnet,
Herts EN4 8AE

020 8441 4213

Cockfosters Clinic

23 Station Parade,
Cockfosters Road,
Herts EN4 0DW

020 8440 8442

Palmers Green Clinic

Rochdale Surgery,
Broomfield Avenue,
Palmers Green N13 4JJ

020 8886 3631

Hendon Clinic

Laboratory Spa & Health Club
1 Hall Lane
London NW4 4TJ

020 8201 5500

www.tiptoefootcare.com
HPC and State Registered Podiatrist

Your Foot Care and Podiatry Guide to Diabetes



Tiptoe
Foot Care

Your Feet in Our Hands

Understanding diabetes

Glucose is a form of a simple sugar which the body uses for energy. Glucose can be obtained from various foods. The amount of glucose (sugar) in blood has to be kept at a steady level and a hormone called Insulin, is used to control the level. Insulin is released from the pancreas in response to food and this regulates the blood sugar level.

Diabetes Mellitus is a condition where the blood sugar level is not effectively controlled by insulin. The sugar accumulates in the blood because the insulin is not stimulating the sugar uptake into the cells. This sugar then passes through the kidneys which results in sugar being present in the urine.

There are two types of diabetes and these are:

Type I: Patients need daily injections of insulin in conjunction with a healthy diet. This is because the pancreas is not producing any insulin. It normally occurs in younger people.

Type II: The pancreas is still functioning as it is able to produce some insulin but not enough to control the amount of sugar in the blood. This type of diabetes usually occurs later on in life. Controlling your diet and weight is very important. Treatment for this condition may require tablets or insulin as well.

Both conditions are life-long. A healthy diet, regular exercise and regular review by your doctor and other health care professionals are essential.

How diabetes can affect your feet

There are three main ways in which

diabetes may affect the foot and can exist together or separately.

Ischaemia- Reduced circulation

This occurs when large blood vessels or arteries have their inner walls covered by a fatty substance called an artheroma. This results in less room for the blood to flow down to the foot. There also may be changes to smaller blood vessels such as the ones in the foot. In severe cases a blockage can occur in the vessel. Diabetes can also cause hardening of the arteries as calcium becomes deposited in the vessel wall, thus causing the blood not to be pumped efficiently around the body. Smoking can aggravate the problem. It is important to maintain a good blood supply as it helps maintain healthy skin and tissues and heal any open wounds. Regular blood supply checks can be carried out easily by feeling for pulses in the foot and this should be carried out routinely by a Podiatrist or other Health Care Professionals.

Neuropathy- Impaired sensation

This is where the nerves in the foot and lower leg have been damaged by diabetes. You may be unable to distinguish the difference between hot and cold, or feel sharp objects. The skin can often appear dry due the loss of nerves stimulating sweating which helps keep the foot hydrated. A podiatrist can routinely perform a simple test that will identify any problems.

Changes in foot shape

This is likely to occur in association with reduced sensation. The nerves controlling the muscles do not work properly and this can cause clawing of the toes. The balls of

the feet can become more prominent. This can cause a change in the way you walk or stand which can cause abnormal pressure areas and calluses.

How to prevent foot problems:

1. General measures

Ensure that you do everything you can to maintain good control of your blood sugar level. It is very important not to smoke, as it increases the chances of problems occurring.

2. Daily foot checks

You may not be aware of injury to your feet, therefore it is important to incorporate checking your feet as part of your daily routine. If you have poor eyesight please ask a friend or relative to help you. If you can not reach your feet use a well-positioned mirror to see parts of the foot that can not normally be seen. Look out for any signs of infection. The signs to look for are:

Localised/Spreading redness,
Pain Pus/liquid
Swelling Loss of sensation/function

3. General nail cutting

It is advised that diabetics should not cut their nails because if you cut the nails yourself, you could be at risk of an infection. If the nails are thick, a podiatrist can use a nail drill to reduce the thickness and cut them too.

4. Treating hard skin

Use a foot file on slightly hard skin and then gently rub cream over the area. This will help maintain the elasticity of the skin. For corns and very hard skin, it is best to see a podiatrist to treat the areas. Do not use a blade, razor or scalpel

yourself as you cannot see how much skin you are taking off and this may cause an open wound, infection and scarring.

5. Bathing

Wash your feet with warm water and soap. Make sure you dry carefully in between your toes, this will prevent the skin cracking. It is important to check the temperature of the bath water before you get in as you may lose temperature sensation in your feet and not realise it. This could result your feet being scalded.

6. Socks and hosiery

Natural fibres such as cotton or wool are preferable. Change socks every day.

7. Footwear

Always ensure that your shoes have a round wide, deep toe box and compare the shape of your toes with that of the shoe. Laces are best for fastening shoes, but buckles or Velcro straps are just as effective. A ¼ inch of space between the end of your longest toe and the end of the shoe is ideal. If your feet swell, take care not to lace, buckle or fastening too tightly. The height of the heel should not be more than one inch and leather uppers are preferred. If possible have your feet measured before buying shoes. The best time to have your feet measured is at the end of day as feet generally as they swell slightly throughout the day.

Heat

Your feet may not be able to tell hot from cold. Don't use hot water bottles to warm your feet or sit in front of a fire. Burns can occur easily and they may not heal.