

## Your feet are important especially when you've got diabetes

**Every week diabetes causes over 150 amputations in the UK.**

People with diabetes can get foot problems because there is too much blood glucose (also called sugar) in the blood over a long period of time.

This can stop your nerves working so you might not feel when you've cut your foot or burned yourself.

It can also make it difficult for your body to heal itself properly. This means even small cuts, blisters, burns or infections can lead to ulcers and amputations.

If people manage their diabetes well most foot problems, including amputations, can be prevented.

You can also dramatically reduce your chances of foot problems by taking good care of your feet.

This leaflet tells you how.

### Never ignore a problem with your feet

- Foot problems can develop extremely quickly. Urgent treatment is vital.
- If you have any concerns about your feet contact your diabetes healthcare team.
- Know who to call at the first sign of any new foot problems and keep their numbers handy.

#### For more information and advice

Go to [www.diabetes.org.uk/putting-feet-first](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/putting-feet-first)

Call **0345 123 2399\***

Monday to Friday, 9am–7pm

Email [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk)

# Simple steps to healthy feet if you've got diabetes



# Take these simple steps to healthy feet

## Go to your foot check



If you're over 12 years old a trained professional should inspect your bare feet once a year. This will spot if you are at risk of any foot problems.

## Know how your feet are doing

At the end of the foot check you should be told if you are at high risk of developing foot problems or if you need to see a specialist for expert foot advice.

## Look at your feet every day



Whether it's when you're putting your socks on or just before bed check your feet every day. If you see any colour changes, swelling, pain, cuts or bruises, build-up of hard skin, or anything unusual tell your diabetes team.

## If you lose feeling in your feet be extra careful

Being at high risk of foot problems or losing feeling in your feet means you might not realise when you've hurt yourself. Try not to go barefoot, especially on hot sand or gravel, and don't sit too close to radiators or heaters.

## Watch out cutting your nails



If your body can't heal itself properly any kind of wound can increase the chances of a serious foot problem so cut your nails carefully. Don't cut down the side of your nails to avoid ingrowing toenails.

## Don't use corn-removing plasters or blades

These can damage your skin and cause more problems for your feet. If you have corns a healthcare professional should deal with them.

## Make sure your socks and shoes fit



Blisters can be dangerous for people with diabetes. If your shoes are too tight, too loose or rub you then don't wear them. Even if they look great.

## Take control of your diabetes

Easier said than done. But lowering high amounts of sugar in your blood will help prevent nerve damage and can stop things getting worse. Ask your diabetes team about the different ways they can help.

## Ask for help to stop smoking



Smoking makes it harder for blood to travel around your body (like to your feet) so puts you at even greater risk of amputation. Your healthcare team can make it easier to quit.

