

FOOT CARE

Diabetes can lead to problems with your feet because of the effects of high blood sugar on circulation (blood flow) and nerve function (sensation). Due to changes in blood flow and sensation, even a small foot problem can become a major one that can result in amputation. Your physician may refer you to a foot specialist (podiatrist) if necessary. In order to find a podiatrist in your preferred provider network, you can call TML IEBP's Member Service Team at (800) 282-5385.

Foot care is an important part of your diabetes management program. It is recommended that you check your feet daily. Be sure to look at the bottom of your feet. Use a mirror if you can't see them well or have someone check them for you. Look for:

- Changes in color;
- Signs of infection (redness, swelling, soreness, drainage);
- Sores, blisters or calluses;
- Skin cracks or any open areas;
- Changes in toenails.

The best treatment is to prevent foot problems from occurring by:

- reporting any problems with your feet to your doctor as soon as possible;
- removing your shoes and socks every time you see your doctor and have him/her check your feet;
- washing your feet everyday and apply a moisturizing lotion (except between the toes);
- cutting your toenails straight across with a straight edged pair of clippers;
- never going barefoot;
- always wearing socks and shoes that fit properly;
- not letting your feet get too hot or too cold;
- not wearing anything that would hinder the circulation to your feet, such as tight fitting socks;
- having your doctor check the sensation of your feet at least once a year. (This will give you information about areas of your feet to protect and watch more closely);
- keeping your blood sugar as close to normal as possible;
- not smoking. Smoking will further constrict blood vessels and reduce the blood flow to your feet; and
- Exercise helps the circulation to your feet.

For more information contact:

American Diabetes Association
1701 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
Phone: (800) 343-2383
www.diabetes.org

Source: American Diabetes Association

HEALTHY INITIATIVES

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