



Sierra Endocrine Associates

Medical Group

Endocrinology, Diabetology, & Metabolism

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Foot Care with Diabetes

Many people need to pay more attention to their feet. This may be especially true when you have diabetes. Several factors can put feet at risk for problems:

- Smoking
- Lack of exercise
- Overweight, and
- Diabetes.

Basic foot care is important for anyone with diabetes because most problems are preventable. A major study showed a 60% decrease in developing diabetes nerve damage (neuropathy) with improved blood sugar control and basic care.

Keeping Healthy Feet Healthy

Healthy feet can feel even the lightest touch, have good circulation, and healthy skin and nails. Skin is healthy when there are no cracks, sores, calluses or signs of extreme dryness or infection. If feet are healthy some general precautions are needed:

- Buy and wear shoes that fit. If some skin areas stay red when you remove your shoes or if you have developed corns or calluses, these are signs of poor fit.
- Wear socks that cushion and protect your feet. Avoid socks that have ridges, wrinkles or tight elastic bands.
- Wash and dry your feet every day. Pay special attention to drying between your toes. Use a small amount of foot powder between toes if your feet tend to sweat.
- Wear clean socks every day.
- Use a rich lotion that is high in oils, petrolatum or lanolin. Avoid lotions that have alcohol high in the ingredients list. You may need lotions on your hands several times each day, but only need lotion on your heels and feet at night or after bathing.
- Trim toe nails straight across. You may file across nails that are thick to make them more pliable.
- Make an appointment with a foot doctor (podiatrist) if nails are very thick or they tend to crack and split, or for corn/ callus removal.
- Break in new shoes by wearing them for short periods for the first few days.

In addition to preventive care, it is wise to look at your feet whenever you shower or bathe to check for blisters, sores or other changes that would benefit from medical treatment. You can use home remedies for a few days, but consult your doctor if these minor problems are not improving.

Taking Care of Feet at Risk

Your feet require extra attention if they have any of the following problems or potential problems:

- Lack of protective sensation
- Decreased circulation
- Overlapping toes, prominent bunions or other structural changes
- Thick calluses, especially bleeding under a callus
- Skin or nail changes
- Uneven wear on shoes or an abnormal gait
- History of having sores or ulcers that were slow to heal
- You are currently smoking
- Blood sugars are frequently 50 or more points above your target range
- You cannot see or reach your feet to check them

Some of these risk factors are reversible. For example, if a podiatrist removes calluses and you begin to wear shoes that fit, you are no longer at risk for an infection that might go unnoticed under the callus. For higher risk feet, all of the basic care is still important with a few additional points:

- Take off your shoes and socks at each visit to Sierra Endocrine Associates to have your feet checked at least 4 times a year
- Select shoes that fit with extra attention to the depth of the toe box or order custom shoes if you can't find shoes in retail stores. Insurance usually pays for these shoes. Your provider can write a prescription and direct you to a vendor in our area.

Taking care of your feet takes minutes a day and having comfortable feet at the end of the day is worth it!

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