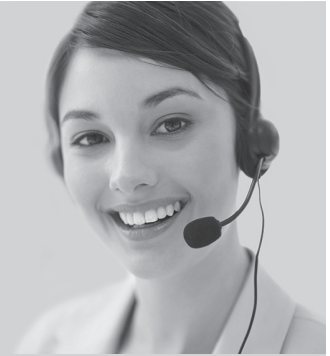


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘Foot Care for Diabetes.’
I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



Take care of your feet every day! This is good advice for all of us and especially if you have diabetes. High blood glucose can cause nerve damage in your feet and lower legs. It can also cause poor blood flow to these areas.

If you have nerve damage:

- You may not feel pain, heat, or cold in your feet.
- You may injure your feet and not notice it. This is even more likely if you don’t check your feet every day. Or if you injure an area that you cannot see easily.

If you have poor blood flow:

- It is harder for a sore or infection to heal.
- If you overlook it, the problem may get worse. It may even become so serious that you need an amputation.

Tips for Taking Care of Your Feet

The best way to take care of your feet is to make it a daily habit, just like brushing your teeth. Follow the tips below. Check the ones you would like to put into action right away.

- Check your feet daily. Look for cuts, sores, scrapes, or blisters. Look for cracks or red areas. Look for swelling or infected toenails. Stay alert to how your feet look and feel.
- Don’t forget the bottom of your feet. What if you can’t reach or see them? Use a floor mirror or a hand-held mirror. Or sit in front of a full-length mirror.
- Wash your feet in warm, not hot, water. Do not soak your feet. Soaking causes dry skin.
- Keep your feet dry. Dry them well after washing. Be sure to dry between your toes. Use talcum powder if needed.
- Keep your feet soft. Rub a thin coat of skin lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet. Or use skin cream or petroleum jelly.

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- Do not put lotion or cream between your toes. This might cause an infection.
- Do you have corns or calluses? Do not try to cut or trim them. Do not use any over-the-counter treatments for them. Ask for your doctor's advice. See a foot care doctor if your doctor advises you to.
- Keep your toenails trimmed and smooth. Trim them yourself only if your doctor says it's okay. You may need to buy a new nail clipper, emory board, and pumice stone. If your toenails are very thick or hard, don't try to trim them. You might hurt yourself. Ask your doctor or a foot care doctor for help.
- Wear comfortable shoes that fit you well. Give away shoes that don't fit. Keep in mind that shoe size often goes up with age. Do not walk barefoot, even in your own home. Keep slippers by your bed. Put them on as soon as you get up.
- Wear cotton or wool socks that are smooth, with no bumps or seams.
- Exercise is a key part of keeping your feet, and the rest of you, healthy. Choose activities you like that are gentle on your feet. Try walking, swimming, or dancing.
- Stop smoking. Smoking narrows blood vessels and reduces blood flow, especially to your legs and feet.
- Call your doctor within 48 hours if you notice any problem with your feet.

Tips for Remembering Your Daily Foot Care

Do you sometimes forget your daily foot care? Taking care of your feet at the same time every day can help make it a habit. Here are some good times to take care of your feet. Check one or more that might work for you:

- After every shower or bath
- Before you go to bed at night
- When you get out of bed in the morning
- Before you put your socks, shoes, or slippers on
- Before you brush your teeth or hair

Other ways to remember your daily foot care:

- Check your feet whenever a family member or caregiver visits. Ask them for help if needed.
- Put a sticky note on your bathroom mirror to remind you.



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Be sure to ask your doctor to:

- Check your feet at every visit. Take your shoes and socks off when you get in the exam room.
- Check for sense of feeling and blood flow in your feet, at least once a year.
- Show you how to care for your feet.
- Decide if special shoes would help your feet stay healthy.
- Refer you to a foot care doctor if needed.

Take Stock

Take a minute to think about your own foot care. Answer the following questions:

1. When was the last time your doctor checked your feet?

2. When was your last full foot exam (should be done at least once a year)?

3. When was your last visit (if any) to a foot care doctor?

4. What foot problems have you had in the past? Dry skin Cuts, sores, or scrapes
 Blisters Cracks Redness Changes in foot shape Swelling Infected
toenails Very hard or thick toenails Loss of feeling Burning or tingling Poor blood
flow Other _____

5. What did your doctor say to do about those problems?

6. Have you followed your doctor's advice?



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7. How often do you check your feet for signs of problems?

- Daily A few times a week Weekly Monthly A few times a year Never

8. How do you remember to check your feet daily?

9. What foot problems should you seek care for now? Dry skin Cuts, sores, or scrapes Blisters Cracks Redness Changes in foot shape Swelling Infected toenails Very hard or thick toenails Loss of feeling Burning or tingling Poor blood flow Other

Be good to your feet! They will thank you for it many times over.

Take Action

Choose two of the tips above for taking care of your feet or remembering to do so. Make a plan below for how you will put them into action during the coming week. Be specific.

Example:

1. I will buy five pairs of cotton socks, without seams, on Saturday.
2. On Sunday I will ask my daughter to check my feet each time she visits me.

My Plan:

1. _____
2. _____



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