



Prevention of Diabetic Foot Ulcers

What is a Diabetic Foot Ulcer?

Ulcers are open sores on the body caused by broken skin that fails to heal; for individuals with diabetes these sores commonly occur on the foot¹.

Individuals with diabetes are prone to foot ulcers because of the following risk factors:²

- ✓ Diabetes duration >10 years
- ✓ Poor blood sugar control
- ✓ Loss or impairment of sensation in toes/feet/legs (peripheral neuropathy)
- ✓ Poor blood flow to toes/feet/legs (peripheral arterial disease)
- ✓ Structural foot deformity
- ✓ Calluses or bony foot prominences
- ✓ Presence of dry or cracked skin on feet
- ✓ Increased pressure applied to bottom of feet
- ✓ Cigarette smoking
- ✓ Use of ill-fitting shoes

Take Care of your Feet Daily

Keep on top of your foot self-care. Follow these recommendations from the experts:³

- ✓ Manage blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.
- ✓ Perform daily foot inspections (See next box for details)
- ✓ Wear appropriate footwear, and check and shake out your shoes before putting them on—every time.
- ✓ Learn to recognize the signs of complications and know where to go for assistance.

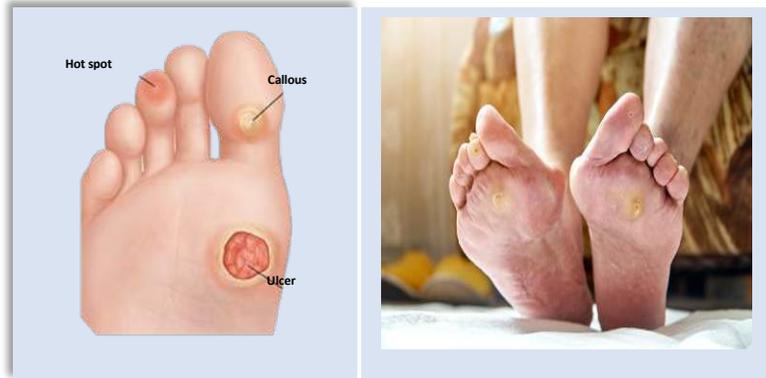


Figure 1: Diabetic foot ulcer formation

Perform a Daily Foot Exam

Performing this foot exam daily can prevent you from dealing with ulcers and face fear of amputation:³

- ✓ Examine the area between the toes, on the sides and bottom of the foot for skin breakdown and any other changes.
- ✓ Use a mirror to examine the bottoms of your feet (if you need).
- ✓ Inspect your nails for tears, irregular edges, colour changes in the nail bed, bruising or trauma.
- ✓ Contact your healthcare, foot care and footwear providers if you notice any signs and symptoms that concern you.
- ✓ Consider measuring the temperature of your feet (thermometry testing) using a personal infrared thermometer to detect hot spots that can alert you to early signs of complication.⁴
- ✓ The sooner a foot issue is identified, the sooner it can be addressed.



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How to Reduce Your Risks

You should be on top of your care by performing appropriate foot self-care can save your money, foot and life. Here are some key preventive measures you can take:^{2,3}

1. Wash and dry your feet thoroughly.
2. Moisturize your feet daily to prevent the skin on your feet from itching and/or cracking; do not moisturize between your toes as it may encourage fungal infections.
3. Inspect your feet every day; especially in between your toes and the bottom of your feet.
4. Inspect your shoes before you put them on each time; shake and feel inside the shoe.
5. Do not walk barefoot; wear shoes indoors and outdoors.
6. Only wear comfortable shoes that fit your feet; avoid shoes that are too large/small. Custom footwear or orthotics may be necessary!
7. Wear loose fitting socks to help promote blood circulation to your feet.
8. Cut your toenails straight across to avoid ingrown toenails.
9. Visit your healthcare provider (i.e., physician, chiropodist, wound care specialist) frequently for a comprehensive foot examination including monofilament test for sensation under your foot (Figure 3).
10. Keep control of your blood sugar levels; exercise daily and eat a well-balanced diet!
11. Stop use of cigarettes and/or alcohol.



Figure 3: Monofilament test

Contact a Healthcare Professional

Contact your healthcare provider if you have a new problem with your feet, such as:^{2,3}

- ✓ A new sore or ulcer.
- ✓ A break in your skin that won't heal. after several days.
- ✓ Bleeding corns or calluses.
- ✓ An ingrown toenail.

OR

If you have symptoms of infection, such as:²

- ✓ Increased swelling, pain, warmth or redness to the site.
- ✓ Pus draining from the site.
- ✓ A fever and/or chill.

Request to be sent to a *foot or wound care specialist* if you notice and/or your healthcare provider notice any concern with your feet or if you develop an ulcer in your foot. Our team at the **Advanced** are experts in wound management.



Contact us to learn more!

(807) 700-1514

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References

1. Wounds Canada. (n/d). *Overview: Diabetic foot ulcers*. Retrieved from: <https://www.woundscanada.ca/news/240-diabetic-healthy-feet-and-you/for-patients-and-public/291-diabetic-foot-ulcers-overview-2>
2. Botros, M., Kuhnke, J., Goettl et al. (2019). *Best practice recommendations for the prevention and management of diabetic foot ulcer*. Retrieved from: <https://www.woundscanada.ca/news/240-diabetic-healthy-feet-and-you/for-patients-and-public/291-diabetic-foot-ulcers-overview-2>
3. Botros, M., Kuhnke, J. L., & Weisz, T. (2020). Amputation prevention: Your role in saving limbs of persons living with diabetic foot complications. *Wound Care Canada*; 18(1):47-49. Retrieved from: <https://www.woundscanada.ca/docman/public/wound-care-canada-magazine/2020-vol-18-no-1/1670-wcc-spring-2020-v18n1-final-p-47-56-amputation-prevention/file>
4. Diabetes in Control. Temp Touch – Infrared Skin Thermometer. June 21, 2010. Retrieved from: <http://www.diabetesincontrol.com/temptouchr/>