

## Footwear and Foot Care Information

Please ask for a copy of our “Wearing the Right Footwear” and “Basic Foot Care Advice” leaflets.

## Professional Healthcare from a Podiatrist

Access to NHS care for patients with diabetes will depend on your individual needs; your doctor will be able to tell you if you can be referred or not. If you are not eligible to receive Podiatry through the NHS you should ensure that any Podiatrist you do consult is registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC). You can do this by telephoning the Registration Department on 0300 500 6184, or you can check online at : [www.hcpc-uk.org](http://www.hcpc-uk.org)

## Further Advice and Support



Diabetes UK is the largest organisation in the UK working for people with diabetes, funding research, campaigning and helping people live with the condition.

Tel: 0345 123 2399  
Email: [helpline@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:helpline@diabetes.org.uk)  
Website: [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

If you have any questions regarding the information in this leaflet, please contact Podiatry Services

Further information about the service and how to manage a range of foot health problems yourself, can also be found on our website: [www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry](http://www.livewellsouthwest.co.uk/project/podiatry)

## Contact Details

Podiatry Services  
Beauchamp Centre  
Mount Gould Hospital  
200 Mount Gould Road  
Plymouth  
PL4 7QD

Tel: 01752 434855 Email: [livewell.podiatrypatients@nhs.net](mailto:livewell.podiatrypatients@nhs.net)

# Podiatry Services Patient Information Leaflet



## Diabetes and Your Feet: Key Information for Patients with Diabetes

(March 2023)

General information about the effects of diabetes on your feet and advice on keeping them healthy

## Why Do Patients With Diabetes Get Foot Problems?

Diabetes Mellitus, regardless of whether you need Insulin or need to follow a diet to control it, can have a number of effects on your lower limbs but especially the feet. Not everyone will develop these problems and there is no way of telling who will or will not, but controlling your blood sugar levels is very important in preventing long-term problems. There are two main ways in which diabetes can affect your feet:

### Circulation:

- Diabetes can damage the blood vessels that supply the legs and feet. These vessels may become narrowed or even blocked
- This means that some people develop a poor blood supply to the feet and legs. Some people may get cramps when they walk or exercise, or in severe cases when lying in bed
- Wounds may then not heal as quickly and infections can be more difficult to treat

### Nerve Supply:

- Diabetes can cause damage to the nerves that allow us to feel things such as touch, pressure and pain.
- This may result in you not being able to feel certain sensations and have “numb” feet and sometimes your lower leg - this is called neuropathy. Some people experience painful sensations rather than a loss of feeling, but this is also neuropathy
- If you cannot feel your feet properly they are more susceptible to injury from ill-fitting shoes, damage from heat sources or loose objects such as grit inside footwear
- This can cause wounds that may be difficult to heal and which you may not realise you have until you look at your feet

An absence or reduction of sensation and a poor circulation accounts for a large number of foot problems amongst patients with Diabetes. A painless abrasion, no matter how small, can allow bacteria to enter and an infection to spread, affecting the control of blood glucose levels. Seemingly trivial wounds and injuries, if not treated promptly, may lead to serious complications.

Be vigilant. Check your feet daily and get to know what is “normal” for you. If changes (such as those below) cause you concern consult a Podiatrist or Doctor’s Practice for advice immediately. By following a simple foot care routine you can help prevent foot problems.

### Seek advice if you notice:

- Any colour change in your leg or foot especially if it is sudden and combined with pain
- Any discharge from a break or crack in the skin, from a lesion or from beneath a toe nail
- Any swelling, throbbing, redness or pain in any part of your foot

### First Aid Measures

Minor injuries can be treated quite adequately at home provided you seek help if the injury does not respond quickly to first aid:

- Clean wounds with some tepid salty water using ordinary table salt
- Minor cuts and abrasions should be covered with a clean, sterile non-adherent dressing. Never place adhesive strapping directly over a wound. These dressings can be bought from any Chemist and it is advisable to keep a supply at home.
- Never use cotton wool to clean or dress wounds
- Cool any burns with cold water for 10 minutes. Afterwards cover the area with a non-adherent sterile dressing and seek medical attention
- Do not wrap adhesive tape or bandages completely around a toe
- Do not “prick” blisters. If they burst dress them as above
- If in any doubt contact your podiatrist, doctor, nurse, Diabetes Centre or the Emergency Department (A&E) at your nearest hospital
- NHS 111 Service: Call 111 if you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency

### Heat and Cold

- Beware of temperatures which are too hot or cold. Never sit too close to fires or heaters or put feet directly onto hot water bottles
- Try using thermal clothing or layered clothes to keep warm in winter, keep your legs wrapped up warm, not just your feet
- Remember to use sun block on the feet during the summer or on holiday and to wear shoes to protect feet from hot sand on the beach