
Foot Care

GENERAL INFORMATION

Foot care is important, especially if you have diabetes or poor circulation. Signs to watch for are cold or swollen feet; painful, burning or tingling feelings; lack of sensation (feeling); and slow healing of sores on the feet.

GUIDELINES

Check Your Feet Daily

1. Look for any infection (redness, swelling, pus, or pain), dry skin, cracks, blisters, cuts, and any changes in skin color or temperature.
2. Look at the tops and bottoms, between the toes, and around the toenails. Use good light; a mirror or magnifying glass can be helpful.

Wash Your Feet Daily with Warm Water and Mild Soap

1. Test the water temperature with your wrist before putting your feet in the water.
2. Soaking your feet is not necessary. It can be harmful and cause skin to crack and dry.
3. Dry your feet well, especially between the toes. Be gentle.
4. Use a mild lotion or skin cream daily for dry skin. You may use lanolin, vegetable oil, Crisco, Vaseline, cold cream, Nivea, and Eucerin. Do not use creams or lotions between toes or on open cuts.
5. Use a little powder for sweaty feet. You may use nonperfumed powder, talcum powder, or cornstarch to help keep your feet dry. Do not let the powder cake, especially between toes.
6. Use a small piece of plain gauze, cotton, or lamb's wool between toes if your toes overlap or if you have trouble with wetness between toes.

Cut Your Toenails Straight Across with Nail Clippers

1. Toenails are softer after bathing.
2. Use a file (emery board) to remove sharp edges.
3. Do not treat ingrown toenails or corns yourself. Call your doctor, nurse, or foot specialist.
4. Do not use chemicals (like iodine) or corn and callus removers.

5. Do not use razor blades, scissors, or other tools to cut toenails, corns, or calluses.

Wear Proper Shoes and Socks

1. Wear shoes that are wide and long enough to allow toes to wiggle without pressure. Shoes should be comfortable, fit well, and have good support.
2. Avoid shoes with seams or buckles that rub on your feet. Open shoes and sandals should not be worn if you have foot problems.
3. Buy new shoes in the afternoon. Your feet will be larger after walking for a while. Break new shoes in gradually.
4. Do not go barefoot, especially on hot sand or concrete.
5. Shake out shoes (to remove small objects) before putting them on.
6. Wear clean, dry socks or stockings every day. Socks should be colorfast and fit well.
7. Avoid tight socks, stockings, or garters with elastic tops.

Exercise Your Feet

1. Walking or doing other exercises your doctor or nurse has shown you can help your circulation.
2. Wear sturdy, comfortable shoes when walking.
3. Check your feet after exercise (for blisters, cuts, or redness).
4. Do not walk if you have pain or an open sore that rubs the shoe.

General Reminders

1. If you need help in caring for your feet, ask family or friends for assistance.
2. Do not put heat or cold packs directly on your feet (no heating pads, hot water bottles, or ice packs). Your feet may not have enough feeling to warn you of injury. Wear extra cotton socks or use a blanket to keep your feet warm at night.
3. No smoking. It is bad for your circulation. Crossing your legs also cuts down the circulation to your feet.
4. Eat a balanced diet. Limit the amount of cholesterol, saturated fat, and caffeine in your diet.
5. First aid for minor cuts and scratches:
 - a. Wash the area with warm water and mild soap.

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- b. Dry your foot.
 - c. Cover the area with a dry, sterile bandage.
 - d. Use paper tape instead of adhesive tape.
6. Call your doctor or nurse if you have a foot infection (pain, tenderness, swelling, redness,

pus, or a warm/hot area), an ingrown toenail, a problem cutting your toenails, or any foot problems or questions. Remember: early treatment can prevent major foot problems.

OTHER INSTRUCTIONS
