

10 Steps to Healthier Feet

If you have diabetes, nerve damage can cause loss of feeling in your feet, leading to ulcers, sores, injuries, and in some cases, amputation. To ensure your feet stay as healthy as possible, the Borgess Diabetes Center recommends following these steps:

Step 1: If you smoke, quit. Smoking increases your risk of suffering from diabetes-related complications, including foot/circulation problems, heart attack and stroke.

Step 2: Inspect your feet thoroughly every day. Look between toes for blisters, cuts and scratches. If your vision is impaired, have a friend or family member inspect your feet and trim your nails.

Step 3: Carefully wash and dry your feet daily. While skin is soft (after washing), calluses can be gently buffed with a pumice stone to reduce their size. Do not attempt to cut or trim calluses with anything sharp.

Step 4: Avoid extreme temperatures. Be sure to test water with your elbow or a thermometer before bathing, and do not walk barefoot, especially on hot surfaces (e.g., sandy beaches).

Step 5: If your feet feel cold at night, wear socks instead of using hot water bottles or heating pads.

Step 6: Before putting on shoes, look inside them for foreign objects, nail points and torn linings. Don't wear shoes without socks.

Step 7: Change socks daily. Do not wear socks with seams, holes or tears.

Step 8: Purchase shoes that fit well and feel comfortable. Don't depend on them to stretch out. When purchasing new shoes, try them on in the evening, when feet are the widest. Avoid buying or wearing sandals with thongs between the toes (e.g., flip-flops).

Step 9: Cut nails straight across. Never cut corns or calluses, or use chemical agents to remove them. Follow the advice of your physician or podiatrist.

Step 10: See your physician or podiatrist regularly for foot examinations.

About Our Foot Care Program

The Borgess Diabetes Center offers a comprehensive foot care program. Patient visits include:

- A special exam for nerve sensitivity or insensitivity (to check for neuropathy)
- Foot and nail inspection with pulse and circulation evaluation
- Footwear assessment
- Instruction on properly caring for your feet
- Toenail trimming and filing, as well as skin moisturizing
- Referral to podiatry or other specialists as needed

For an appointment or more information, call **(269) 226.8321**. You can also learn more at **diabetes.borgess.com**.

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