

Taking Good Care of Your Feet When You Have Diabetes



ALASKA NATIVE
TRIBAL HEALTH
CONSORTIUM



Does having diabetes mean I will have foot problems?

No, many people are able to keep their feet healthy with diabetes. Having diabetes does NOT mean you will have to suffer an amputation. Having diabetes does mean you and your provider are able to do certain things to care for your feet and keep them healthy.

What can I do to keep my feet healthy with diabetes?

There are many things that can be done to keep your feet healthy:

Live healthy with diabetes.

This means making sure blood sugars, blood cholesterol and blood pressure are meeting your goals. If any part of your diabetes isn't controlled, talk to your diabetes team about what steps you can take to get on track.

Stay active.

Being active keeps your blood vessels healthy. Keeping the blood vessels to and from your feet healthy is an important part of protecting your feet. Try for 30 minutes of activity on most days.

Avoid or quit tobacco!

Diabetes and tobacco are a dangerous mix. Avoiding or stopping tobacco is essential for keeping blood vessels healthy. Ask your provider or educator about support for stopping tobacco.

Feel and look at your feet every day.

A family member or friend can also help check your feet. Use your hands to feel for any changes. If you can't see the bottom of your feet, lay a mirror on the floor or use a mirror attached to a handle. If you need help finding a mirror like this, talk to your diabetes provider or educator.

Keep feet clean and the skin on your feet soft.

Wash your feet every day with a gentle soap, rinse well, pat dry and apply lotion.

Do not put lotion between your toes where it can cause sores.

Ask your provider about which lotions to use.

Keep your toenails trimmed straight across, and file any rough edges with a nail file.

If you cannot trim your own toenails, and do not have a family member who can help you, talk to your provider about who can do this for you. Tell your provider if you have an ingrown toenail.



Take care of corns or callouses.

If you have corns or callouses, ask your provider about the best ways to care for them or who can trim them for you.

Always wear shoes and socks.

Shoes and socks keep your feet protected.

Protect feet from the heat and the cold.

Avoid putting feet too close to a heater or getting frostbite.

Tell your provider about any changes in your feet.

Cuts, sores, blisters or any changes in shape or color should be reported to your provider right away. Even if the changes seem small, it is important to report them anyway.

What things can my provider do to help keep my feet healthy?

You can ask your provider to:

Complete an annual foot exam.

Your provider should do an annual foot exam to look for changes, feel for pulses and check for sensation (how well your feet can feel touch). To check for sensation your provider will touch your feet with a small tool called a monofilament. A monofilament looks like a small piece of fishing line. This is a painless test.



Check for changes to your feet every visit: You can help your provider remember to look at your feet during your checkups by taking off your shoes and socks in the exam room. Talk to your provider about any changes you've noticed in your feet, such as changes in color, shape, and sensation. It is also important to report any cuts, sores or ingrown toenails.





Support you in managing your diabetes by providing training and tools that fit with your lifestyle.

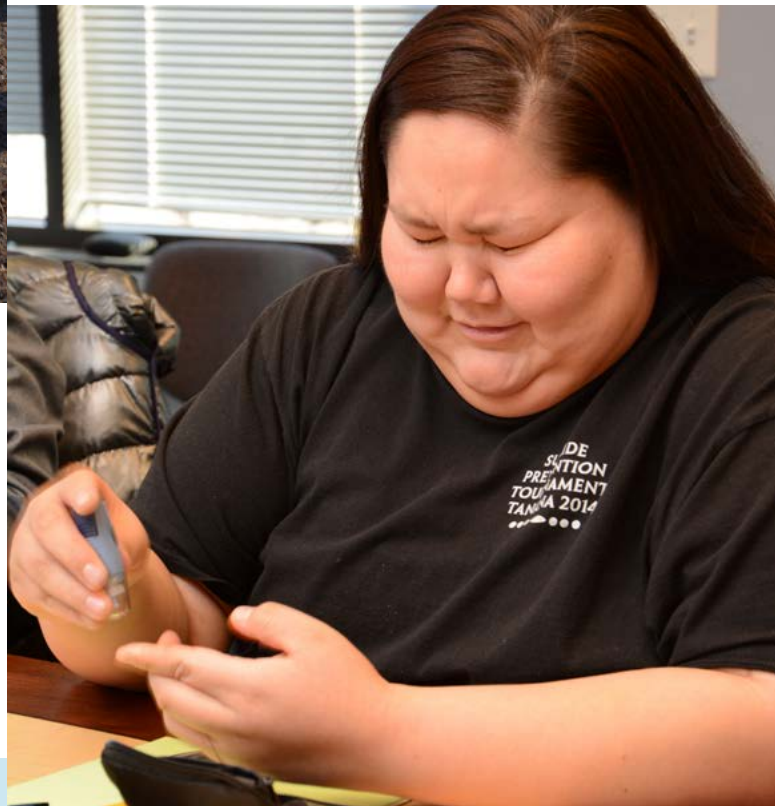
Managing diabetes takes your commitment. You will be making healthy food choices, staying active and practicing self-care. You will use tools such as a home blood sugar monitor and, most likely, medications. Your diabetes team is ready to help you. Talk to them about what is going well or where you have questions.

Do I need to wear special shoes for people with diabetes?

Having diabetes doesn't always mean you will need special shoes. Sometimes people with diabetes can have problems with shoes that don't fit the shape of their feet well or that cause pressure sores. When this happens this person will need help finding better shoes, but if your feet fit comfortably into your shoes, you do not need special "diabetes shoes".

Do I need to buy special socks for people with diabetes?

Unless your provider tells you differently, you do not need to buy special "diabetes socks." If your socks fit you comfortably, do not cut into your legs are not too tight or too loose and have no lumps or seams that cause sores, then your socks are fine. If you have a problem with your feet being too cold or too sweaty, ask your provider which socks may be best for you.



More Information

For more information or if you have questions, contact:

Diabetes Educator: _____

Phone: _____



Diabetes Program

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