

FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

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SPECIAL EDITION

INCLUDE A DPM FOR DIABETES PREVENTION & MANAGEMENT

According to the CDC, more than 100 million US adults are living with either diabetes or prediabetes. If you have diabetes or prediabetes, it is essential to include a podiatrist for proper diabetes prevention and management. In fact, podiatrists can reduce amputation rates up to 80 percent.

In order for you not to become a part of that statistic, here are a few simple things you can do to keep your risk for diabetic ulcers and amputation low:

- 1 Inspect feet daily.** Check your feet and toes every day for cuts, bruises, sores, or changes to the toenails, such as thickening or discoloration.
- 2 Wear thick, soft socks.** Avoid socks with seams, which could rub and cause blisters or other skin injuries.
- 3 Exercise.** Walking can keep weight down and improve circulation. Be sure to wear appropriate athletic shoes when exercising.
- 4 Have new shoes properly measured and fitted.** Foot size and shape may change over time. Shoes that fit properly are important to those with diabetes.
- 5 Don't go barefoot.** Don't go without shoes, even in your own home. The risk of cuts and infection is too great for those with diabetes.
- 6 Never try to remove calluses, corns, or warts by yourself.** Over-the-counter products can burn the skin and cause irreparable damage to the foot for people with diabetes.
- 7 See a podiatrist.** Regular checkups by a podiatrist—at least annually—are the best way to ensure that your feet remain healthy.



**WALKING CAN KEEP
WEIGHT DOWN AND
IMPROVE CIRCULATION.**


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MEMBER **APMA**
AMERICAN PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



APMA TIP: If you have trouble reaching your feet to complete your daily foot exam, prop up a mirror on the floor or ask a friend or family member for help.

RECENTLY DIAGNOSED WITH DIABETES OR PREDIABETES?

Being recently diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes can be overwhelming. Your podiatrist can help take some of the worry by giving you the right tools to lead a healthy and happy life despite being diabetic or pre-diabetic. How can your podiatrist help?

Your podiatrist can help you avoid foot-related complications. Diabetes can increase your risk for peripheral neuropathy.

WHAT IS PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY?

Your peripheral nerves are the nerves that travel to your arms and legs. When the nerves are damaged,

they don't function properly. People with peripheral neuropathy have decreased or abnormal sensation in their toes and fingers. According to the American Diabetes Association, 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes will develop neuropathy within their lifetime. Common symptoms of peripheral neuropathy include burning, numbness, tingling, or shooting or stabbing pain in the toes and/or fingertips.

If these symptoms sound familiar, talk to your podiatrist right away. He or she can help diagnose and maintain peripheral neuropathy.

Peripheral neuropathy can cause numbness in your feet and ankles, so if you injure yourself, you may not even know it. Injuries like these can develop into a diabetic foot ulcer.

WHAT IS A DIABETIC FOOT ULCER?

A diabetic foot ulcer is an open sore or wound that occurs in approximately 15 percent of patients with diabetes and is commonly located on the bottom of the foot. Of those who develop a foot ulcer, 6 percent will be hospitalized due to infection or other ulcer-related complication. However, it is important to know that diabetic foot ulcers are preventable. One of the biggest ways you can reduce your risk of developing a diabetic foot ulcer is by performing a daily foot exam. Here's how:

- Check for loss of sensation in the feet, called peripheral neuropathy
- Examine skin for calluses, blisters, sores, excessively dry or cracked skin, or any other unusual conditions, especially between the toes
- Look for signs of decreased circulation such as thin, fragile, shiny skin with loss of hair
- Check the feet for extreme temperatures (excessive warmth or coldness)
- Inspect nails for thickening, ingrown corners, excessive length, and fungal infection
- Inspect socks or pantyhose for blood or any discharge
- Examine footwear for torn linings, foreign objects like rocks or small pebbles, improper fit, and irritating seams

Diabetes does not need to control you or your life. Including a podiatrist in your diabetes-management team can help you live the life you want to live.