

**According to the National Institute of Health, the following simple everyday steps will help prevent serious complications from diabetes:**

**1. Take care of your Diabetes**

Make healthy lifestyle choices to keep your blood sugar close to normal. Work with your health care team to create a diabetes plan that fits your lifestyle characteristics.

**2. Check your feet every day**

You may have foot problems that you may not be aware of. Check your feet for cuts, sores, red spots, swelling, or infected toenails. Checking your feet should become part of your daily routine. If you have trouble bending over to see your feet, use a plastic mirror to help. You can also ask a family member to help you. **Important:** be sure to call your doctor immediately if a cut, sore, blister, or bruise on your foot does not heal after one day.

**3. Wash your feet every day**

Wash your feet in warm, NOT HOT, water. Do not soak your feet because your skin will get dry. Before bathing or showering, test the water to make sure it is not too hot. You should use a thermometer or your elbow. Dry your feet well. Be sure to dry between your toes. Use talcum powder to keep the skin dry between the toes.

**4. Keep the skin soft and smooth**

Rub a thin coat of skin lotion or cream on the tops and bottoms of the feet. Do not put lotion between the toes, because this might cause infection.

**5. Wear shoes and socks at all times**

Wear shoes and socks at all times. Do not walk barefoot, not even indoors. It is extremely easy to step on something and hurt your feet. Always wear seamless socks, stocking, and nylons with your shoes to help avoid the possibility of blisters and sores developing. Be sure to choose seamless socks that are made of materials that wick moisture away from your feet and absorb shock and shear. Socks made of these materials help keep your feet dry. Always check the insides of your shoes before putting them on. Make sure the lining is smooth and there are no foreign objects in the shoe, such as pebbles. Wear shoes that fit well and protect your feet.

**6. Protect your feet from hot and cold.**

Always wear shoes at the beach or on hot pavement. Put sunscreen on the tops of your feet for protection from the sun. Keep your feet away from radiators or open fires. DO NOT use hot water bottle or heating pads on your feet. If your feet are cold, wear seamless socks at night. Lined boots are good to keep your feet warm in the winter. Choose socks carefully. DO NOT wear socks with seams or bumpy areas. Choose padded socks to protect your feet and make walking more comfortable. In cold weather, check your feet often to keep your feet warm avoid frostbite.

**7. Keep the blood flowing to your feet**

Put your feet up when you are sitting. Wiggle your toes for 5 minutes, 2 or 3 times a day. Move your ankles up and down and in and out to improve blood flow in your feet and legs.

- DO NOT cross your legs for long periods of time.
- DO NOT wear tight socks, elastic, or rubber bands, or garters around your legs.
- DO NOT wear restrictive footwear or foot products. Foot products that can cut off circulation to the feet, such as products with elastic, should not be worn by diabetics.
- DO NOT smoke. Smoking reduces blood flow to your feet.

If you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, work with your health care team to lower it.

### **8. Be more active**

Ask your doctor to plan an exercise program that is right for you. Walking, dancing, swimming, and bicycling are good forms of exercise that are easy on the feet. Avoid all activities that are hard on the feet, such as running and jumping. Always include a short warm-up or cool-down period. Wear protective walking or athletic shoes that fit well and offer good support.

### **9. Communicate with your doctor**

Ask your doctor to check the sense of feeling and pulses in your feet at least once a year. Ask your doctor to tell you immediately if you have serious foot problems. Ask your doctor for proper footcare tips and for the name of your local podiatrist.