



---

**Here are some helpful hints on how to keep your feet healthy.**

### Check feet daily:

- Use good lighting and wear glasses if you have glasses.
- Use a mirror to help you see. If you have trouble seeing, have a family member, friend or care helper look at your feet once a week.
- Look at the top and bottom of each foot and between the toes.
- Look for changes in colour.
- Check for breaks in the skin, blisters, bruises, infections, dry skin and hard areas.
- Feel for changes in temperature.
- Ask to have your feet checked when you visit your doctor or health care provider.



### Wash feet daily when you can:

- Wash your feet with mild soap and warm water. Test the water with your hand to make sure the water is warm. Hot water causes burns.
- Use a soft nailbrush daily to clean under toes.
- While your feet are still wet, use a pumice stone to help prevent calluses.
- Dry your feet well, especially between toes.



- ✗ Do not soak your feet or have your feet in water for more than 10 minutes. This causes dry and cracked skin.

### Apply lotion daily:

- Put non-scented lotion or cream on your heels and the bottoms of your feet. Wipe off any extra lotion.
- ✘ Do not put lotion or cream between your toes or open areas. This causes increased moisture and can lead to infection.



### Nail Care:

- Do nail care after a bath or shower when nails are soft.
- Trim your toenails straight across and file sharp edges. Avoid cutting nails too short.
- ✘ Never use a sharp pointed tool.
- If you have hard or curled nails, problem skin areas, or trouble seeing, get help with your foot care. Talk to your health care provider about where to go for safe foot and nail care.



### Socks:

- Wear clean, proper fitting socks every day.
- White cotton or wool socks are best.
- A good choice in socks for people with diabetes are those that do not contain elastic and fit well around the ankle and leg.
- Remember to always wear socks with your shoes.
- ✘ Do not wear knee high nylons, garters, elastics or tight socks with seams or mends.



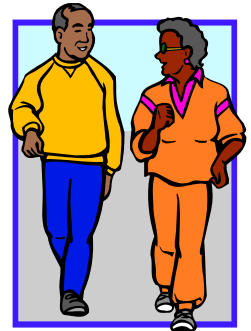
## Shoes:

- Shop for shoes in the afternoon when your feet are a little bigger.
  - Shoes should fit well, provide support and not rub or pinch. Heels should be less than 5 cm high. Buy shoes at a store with staff who know how to fit shoes well.
  - You should have 1 thumb's width between your toe and the end of your shoe when fitted.
  - Look and feel inside each shoe checking for torn lining, rough areas or loose objects before you put them on.
  - When a shoe cannot be fixed, throw the pair away.
- 
- ✗ Do not wear insoles that you buy over-the-counter.
  - ✗ Never walk barefoot indoors or outdoors.
  - ✗ Do not wear sandals with straps between the toes. Straps irritate skin.



## Helpful Hints:

- Keep slippers by your bed so you can put them on and walk with your feet protected.
- Wear socks when your feet are cold. Hot water bottles, heating pads, and microwave bean and oat bags may cause burns.
- Wear sandals or water shoes to protect your feet on beaches, cement, walkways, decks and driveways.
- Clean a cut or crack with mild soap and water and cover with clean dry gauze. Contact your doctor or health care provider right away.
- Wiggle your toes and move your ankles around for a few minutes several times a day to improve blood flow in your feet and legs.
- Exercise regularly to improve circulation.



### Things to avoid and why:

✘ Do not smoke. Smoking slows circulation and causes foot and leg problems. Smoking 1 cigarette reduces circulation to your legs by 30% for 1 hour. If you want help to quit smoking, talk to your health care provider.



✘ Do not use over-the-counter medications or herbal products to treat corns and warts. Do not cut ingrown toenails. See a foot care professional to provide these services.



✘ Do not cross your legs as this slows the blood flow in the lower part of your legs.

✘ Do not use adhesive tape. It can irritate skin. Use special medical paper tape.

### When to call for help:

**Call your doctor, health care provider or foot care professional right away if you:**

- have a blister, sore, crack, or infection
- see or feel changes in your feet such as swelling, pain, redness and/or temperature that is not normal for you
- are concerned about your feet



**See a foot care professional if:**

- you have a corn, callus, bunion, wart, ingrown toenail or think you may have a fungal infection
- your nails are hard, thick, cracked or brittle and you need help with your foot care
- you have a concern about your feet