



How to care for your feet

Patient information

Is my foot at risk?

Diabetes decreases your body's ability to heal so if you injure your foot it is less likely to heal.

Peripheral arterial disease is when there is a decreased amount of blood able to get to the feet. Blood supplies the oxygen and nutrients that wounds need to heal.

The daily ritual:

- Every day you should follow a ritual to ensure you care for your feet well and prevent an injury.
- Clean feet with a pH neutral skin cleanser, ensuring that you wash and dry thoroughly between your toes.
- Moisturise your feet to prevent cracks and calluses in the skin. Do not moisturise between your toes.
- Check your feet for changes. These may include swelling, skin breaks, pain or numbness. You can use a mirror to see the sole of your foot and remember to check between your toes.
- Do not walk barefoot, even inside your house, as any break in the skin is potentially serious.
- Prevent your feet from burning – check the temperature of bath water with your elbow. Avoid hot water bottles, electric blankets and walking on sandy beaches or paving.
- Buy shoes in the afternoon and make sure that they are comfortable. Don't rely on them to stretch.

When to ask for help

Seek help if you notice any:

- change in colour of the skin especially new colour changes
- swelling or redness, especially around the toes or wounds
- pain
- numbness pins and needles or a tingling sensation
- breaks in the skin including cracks, splits or sores.

Why see a podiatrist?

General care

If you have diabetes or peripheral arterial disease (decreased blood supply to your feet) a podiatrist can help you with routine foot check up and care.

Footwear/orthotics

The podiatrist can check your shoes, give you temporary footwear and/or fit you for custom-made footwear if needed.

When you have a wound

Sometimes too much pressure is applied to an area of the foot causing a build-up of callous or the development of a wound. This can be treated with offloading devices fitted by your podiatrist into your footwear.

WHO CAN HELP?

- **Podiatrist:** can diagnose and treat foot conditions and help you with the management of your diabetic foot.
- **Nurse:** can provide education and assistance with care.
- **Diabetes Educator:** controlling your diabetes will greatly reduce the risk of diabetic complications.
- **Dietician:** Can give education on a diabetic diet and if you have wound can help with foods and supplements to improve wound healing.
- **Occupational Therapist:** provide pressure relieving devices.
- **Physiotherapist:** assessment of mobility and suitability of footwear.
- **Doctor** (this includes your GP as well as specialists such as the Endocrinologist and Vascular Surgeons): aid in the management of your diabetes/PVD.
- Everyone in this health care team can assist you with management of your feet and can refer you on to a podiatrist for ongoing care.

Contact us

Mail

Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital
Hospital Avenue Nedlands WA 6009

Phone

Main line 6457 3333
Patient enquiries 6457 4444
Hearing impaired (TTY)
(7.30am to 8.30pm) 6457 3900

Web

www.scgh.health.wa.gov.au

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.

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