

TAKING CARE OF YOUR FEET

Feet are one of the parts of the body that can cause most problems for diabetics. Diabetics often lose sensitivity in their feet and so fail to notice pricks, grazes, cuts and other alterations in them. You must therefore take special care of your feet to prevent the appearance of grazes, infections and, in the last instance, gangrene, which could lead to amputation of the limb.

Feet hygiene

It is advisable to wash your feet every day with warm water and dry them thoroughly afterwards, especially between the toes, using a hand mirror to check for cuts or changes in colour. If you find any cuts, you need to wash them with salt water and if there are any changes in colour, go to see your doctor.

You should cut your toenails in a straight line across the top –never tear them- and then file them so that the edges do not cut into your toes. If your toenails are very thick or your eyesight is not very good, get someone else to cut them for you or go to the chiropodist's. If the skin is dry, rub it with lanolin, oil or moisturising cream.

Footwear

Try not to wear slippers for too long. It is better for you to wear proper shoes. When you buy shoes, avoid narrow models that may be too tight or deform your toes. If necessary, use special orthopaedic inner soles and have your feet checked regularly.

Other advice

- Avoid walking barefoot on rough surfaces (beaches, stones, etc.) to prevent cutting your feet.
- Don't sit near a fire or radiator.
- Don't sit with your legs crossed or wear tight garters or socks, as this restricts blood circulation.
- Don't use corn pads. If you have corns, go to see the chiropodist. Remember to check the inside of your shoes with your hand before putting them on.
- It is advisable to visit the chiropodist once or twice a year. The chiropodist (or podologist) will look after your feet and detect any danger signs before it is too late.

Inform your doctor of any danger signs such as:

- Pus under your toenails or in the middle of corns.
- Changes in the colour of your feet (red, blue or black patches) or the appearance of ulcers or sores.
- Feelings of cold, pain, alterations in sensitivity in your feet (numbness).

