

Top tips for keeping your feet healthy

- Control your blood sugar levels as well as you can. Use your blood sugar meter to find out how you are doing.
- If you develop a blister or a sore on your foot, seek advice straightaway from your doctor or, if you have one, your state-registered chiropodist.
- Keep your feet clean. Wash them every day and dry them carefully, especially between your toes. Then rub a little moisturiser into your legs and feet but not between your toes.
- Keep your toenails trimmed. The current advice is to curve your toe nails gently downwards at either end. To reduce the risk of cutting yourself it can be useful to file your nails regularly, rather than cutting them.
- Choose your shoes and socks carefully. Choose well fitting shoes. Watch out for socks too. Some tightly fitting, nylon varieties can rub your feet very easily.
- Don't walk barefoot. If you have lost some of the feeling in your feet it is best if you don't walk around barefooted. So, slippers in the house and sandals on the beach in future!



Anyone who uses an Abbott Diabetes Care meter can become a member of our **Friends for Life programme**.

Once a member, you are entitled to:

- FREE help and advice
- FREE replacement products and batteries
- FREE monitoring support
- FREE educational materials

To join, send back the warranty card that came with your Abbott Diabetes Care meter. Or, call the Customer Care Line or register online at www.friendsforlife.org.uk

UK Customer Care Line – 0500 467 466

(Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm)

Ireland Customer Care Line – 1 800 776633

(Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm)

Leaflet produced by Abbott Diabetes Care, manufacturer of



FreeStyle mini
Blood Glucose Monitoring System



Optium Xceed™

Ask your nurse or pharmacist for more information



Looking after your feet



Why do I need to look after my feet?

When you have had diabetes for some time, it can cause problems with your feet, mainly through:

Damage to your nerves

Damage to the nerves in your feet is called neuropathy. It is caused by high blood sugar (glucose) levels over many years.

It makes your feet less sensitive to pain and heat, which can make you more prone to accidents:

- You may not be aware that you have stepped on something sharp.
- Or, when warming them, you may not realise that your toes are too close to the heat source.

Poor circulation

If the flow of blood to your feet is poor, it can prolong the recovery time of injuries.

Bad circulation in the feet is a particular problem for people with diabetes who smoke. You will already have been told that smoking and diabetes simply don't mix. If you smoke you are greatly increasing your risk not only of damaging the flow of blood to your feet but also of heart attack and stroke.

If you smoke and your feet often feel cold, it's another incentive to give up smoking for good.



If you suffer from poor circulation and cold feet

Don't:

- Put your feet too close to the fire.
- Place your feet on a hot radiator.
- Use a hot water bottle.
- Warm your feet in a hot bath or bowl of hot water.

Do:

- Try to keep your whole body warm - wrap up well.
- Gently exercise your feet to keep the blood circulating - wiggle your toes and circle your foot backwards and forwards at the ankle.
- When relaxing at home, wear warm socks and slippers and use bed socks at night. Make sure they aren't too tight, restricting your circulation.
- Wear thick socks and fleece lined boots when you go out (but be careful that the thick socks don't make the boots too tight).
- Check your bath water with your elbow to make sure it is not too hot.



What check-ups should I have?

- Check your feet every day - look out for blisters, cuts or scratches. A mirror can be a useful way to see the bottom of your feet. If your eyesight isn't too good, ask a friend or relative to help.

Have regular check-ups with a state-registered chiropodist

- Get your feet inspected regularly. Make sure they are examined at your regular diabetes check-up. You are also entitled, with a referral from your GP, to two free appointments per year with a state-registered chiropodist.

Don't treat corns or verrucas yourself

If you develop corns or verrucas, get some help from **a state-registered chiropodist**. Your GP will be able to recommend one. NEVER treat corns or verrucas yourself with liquids, ointments, paints or plasters. They all contain acids, which can cause further damage to your feet.