

### Foot Care & Limb Design Centre

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(Between National Skin Centre and  
Tan Tock Seng Hospital)

**Contact:**

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Department of  
**Podiatry**

## Caring for the Diabetic Foot



# Why is it Important to Care for the Diabetic Foot?

## Diabetes and Foot Complications

People with diabetes are at risk of foot problems.

Causes	Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of protective sensation due to nerve damage</li><li>• Poor blood flow in the lower limbs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Numbness in the feet and not being able to feel pain when there is an injury or cut</li><li>• Delayed or non-healing wounds</li></ul>



Unable to detect injury

Gangrene due to poor blood flow



If these problems are not addressed early, infection can occur.

In severe cases, amputations may even be required as antibiotics cannot help with the infection.

## Annual Diabetic Foot Screening

All patients with diabetes should go for a foot screening at least **once a year**.

**Foot screening can help to check:**

1. If blood flow to the feet is normal.



2. If there is nerve damage, which can result in the loss of protective sensation in the feet.



## Things to Avoid

### DO NOT

X Use anything sharp on the feet.



### DO NOT

X Soak feet in very hot or cold water.\*



*\*Do not soak your feet as you may scald yourself, increase your risk of skin tears and fungal infections.*

## Daily Visual Foot Checks

### What to check for?

- Wounds, cuts and skin tears
- Blisters
- Callus with discolouration caused by bleeding or an underlying wound

**Please inform your Podiatrist if any of the above happens.**



Bleeding under callus



Removal of overlying callus reveals an underlying wound

### Where and how to check?

Check all areas of the feet including:

- Spaces between the toes
- Back of the heels
- Soles of the feet



If you are unable to bend over to check under your feet, please use a mirror.

If you have poor eyesight, ask a family member or friend to help.

## Signs of a Diabetic Foot Emergency



Seek **immediate medical attention** if the following signs are present in the lower limb or from a wound:

- Redness, warmth, swelling
- Sudden/increased pain
- Pus
- Wound does not improve in 1 week
- Sudden changes to skin colour i.e. black, dark red or purple
- Systemic symptoms - fever, chills



Wound infection:  
Redness, warmth  
and swelling



Right 3<sup>rd</sup> toe purplish  
discolouration

## Wound Care

If wound care is needed, please follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with soap and ensure dressing surfaces are clean.
2. Clean any small wounds or cuts with sterile saline.



3. Dress with antiseptic solution and plaster.



Ensure wound is kept covered at all times and do not get it wet. Re-dress if the dressing gets wet.

Seek medical help if you are unsure of how to care for a wound or if it has not improved.

## Nail Care



### DO

- ✓ Trim toenails straight across.
- ✓ Use a nail file to file down thick nails and sharp edges.
- ✓ File nails in one direction and away from your feet.



### DO NOT

- X Cut down the corners of the nail.
- X Cut the nails too short.

## Callus Care

A callus is an area of thickened skin caused by excessive pressure.



Callus

### DO

- ✓ File down calluses with a foot file or pumice stone after your shower.
- ✓ Apply a suitable moisturiser to soften the thickened skin.



Pumice stone

### DO NOT

- X Use topical acid preparations or corn plasters.
- X Use anything sharp to cut out the thickened skin.

**Seek help from a Podiatrist if you are unsure.**



Corn plaster

Topical acid

## General Foot Care



- ✓ Cleanse your feet daily with mild soap and rinse with water.
- ✓ Dry your feet properly with a clean towel, especially between the toes.



- ✓ Apply moisturiser daily to all areas of your feet except the spaces between the toes.
- ✓ Use suitable indoor footwear at all times to prevent slips and falls.

## Footwear

- Wear shoes which cover your toes and provide good support.
- Ensure that your shoes fit properly (length, width and depth)
- Wear socks with your shoes.
- Always check the inside of shoes/socks for sharp objects, stone or debris before you wear them.
- If you are using a new pair of shoes, try them indoors first. Check your feet regularly for blisters or abrasion. Stop using the shoes if you encounter any issues.

