



# Diabetes Unit

**Tel: 01254 294506**

## LOW RISK

**(Grade 0)**

### Keeping your feet healthy

Diabetes is a life long disease which can cause foot problems. These usually occur because of damage to nerves (affecting the sensation) and blood vessels (circulation)

**Your examination has shown that you have no such damage.** If you keep your diabetes under good control and have an Annual Foot Examination you should continue to be trouble free.

As your feet are "normal" you do not need regular chiropody but can care for them yourself with the advice overleaf.

# Advice to keep your feet healthy

- Get your feet measured when buying new shoes.
- Keep your feet clean by washing every day.
- Any dry skin can be treated with a moisturising cream such as E45 (available at the Chemist, Supermarket or on prescription).
- Don't let your nails grow too long and don't cut them too short. Follow the shape of the nail when cutting.
- If you need any help in caring for your feet contact the nurse or chiropodist at your local Health Centre or Surgery.
- You will get free NHS chiropody treatment. If you want Private treatment choose a State Registered Chiropodist (SRCh).



Produced by the Diabetes Unit, Blackburn, Hyndburn & Ribble Valley

# Moderate Risk

## Preventing problems

Diabetes is a life long disease which can cause foot problems. Your examination has shown:

- The nerves to your feet are affected (you could not feel the fibre)
- The circulation to your feet is reduced

Any loss of sensation means that you may develop blisters and ulcers without being aware that your feet are being injured. You cannot feel them as you should

If the circulation to your feet is reduced an ulcer can be slow to heal.

Keeping good control of your diabetes will help to prevent further damage.

An annual foot examination will detect any further problems.

**The following advice will help you.**

### **Advice to prevent problems**

- Shoes are the main cause of damage to feet because you will not feel if they are "rubbing". Always wear well fitting shoes with soft uppers and no hard seams. Lace-ups are good because they hold your feet firmly in place. Ask your Podiatrist for advice.
- If possible have your feet measured - remember you cannot feel if they fit.
- Socks should be cotton or wool and wear them "inside out" so that the seams do not rub your toes.
- Before putting on socks and shoes check inside them for anything which may rub (stones, hard seams etc)
- Check your feet daily for any signs of damage and when you take your shoes and socks off.
- If you cannot see your feet ask someone to check them for you.
- It is important not to walk barefoot and risk damaging your feet.
- Keep your feet clean by washing everyday and dry thoroughly in-between your toes.
- You cannot feel heat or cold so be very careful when bathing. Test the water with your elbow in case your hands are also affected.
- Remove hot water bottles before going to bed.

- Do not sit with your feet too close to fires and heater
- Do not use any products on your feet unless advised by your Podiatrist.
- Any dry skin can be treated with a moisturising cream such as  
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- You can be seen at your local Health Centre by an NHS podiatrist or if you want private treatment choose a podiatrist who is registered with the Health Professions Council.
- You should see your podiatrist regularly at least every 12 weeks, unless you have a problem needing attention.
- Should you experience any of the below contact your doctor, podiatrist or practice nurse urgently:
  - a cut or break in the skin that does not begin to heal in a few days
  - If your foot or leg becomes red, hot, swollen or painful
  - If you discover oozing from your foot or leg

**Rapid treatment can prevent  
serious problems**



# Diabetes Unit

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## HIGH RISK

(Grade 2)

### Reducing the Risk

Your examination has shown that you have **good circulation** but that the **nerves to your feet have been affected**. (You could not feel the fibre).

You also have a **change in the shape** of your feet and with the loss of sensation this means that you are much more likely to develop blisters or ulcers than when you had normal feeling.

Keeping good control of your diabetes and having an annual foot examination can help to prevent further damage. You will also need to take extra care of your feet because you cannot feel them as you should. The following advice will help you.

## Advice to reduce the risk

- Shoes will be the main cause of damage to your feet. You will not feel if they are rubbing and the shape of your feet will make it hard to buy suitable shoes.
- You will need to buy shoes with soft uppers and no hard seams. Have both feet measured and ensure that shoes are the right length, width and depth.
- If you have difficulty finding shoes to fit you may need surgical shoes. These are available on prescription from the Consultant and do look very acceptable.
- If you wear these special shoes they will protect your feet and should be the only ones you wear. You will be given 2 pairs and should keep them in good repair and renew them when necessary.
- Socks should be cotton or wool and wear them "inside out" so that the seams don't rub on your toes.
- Before putting on socks and shoes check inside them for anything which may rub (stones etc.).
- Check your feet for any signs of damage when you take your shoes and socks off.



- It is important not to walk barefoot and risk damaging your feet.
- Keep your feet clean by washing every day.
- Any dry skin can be treated with a moisturising cream such as E45 (available at the Chemist, Supermarket or on prescription).
- If you cut your own nails follow the shape of the nail, don't cut them too short or let them grow too long.
- Any minor cut or blister should be covered until healed. Dry lint and tape can be used.
- You cannot feel heat or cold so be very careful when bathing – test the water with your elbow in case your hands are also affected.
- Remove hot water bottles before going to bed.
- Don't sit with your feet too close to fires or heaters.
- You will need to see the chiropodist regularly and should contact them or the Nurse or GP at the surgery/clinic if you find any problem between visits. (You can have free chiropody from the NHS chiropodist).



# Diabetes Unit

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## **VERY HIGH RISK**

**(Grade 3)**

### **Preventing another ulcer**

Diabetes has affected the nerves to your feet. This means that you can not feel them properly and would have been unaware that the ulcer was forming.

It is very important that you keep your diabetes under good control and have regular chiropody. The following advice, especially about shoes, will help you to prevent further ulcers.

## Advice to prevent ulcers

- Shoes will be the main cause of any further ulcers. You should be prescribed shoes to wear by the Consultant. These will be specially fitted or made for you by the ORTHOTIST.
- You will be supplied with 2 pairs. Keep them in good repair and renew them when necessary. You should **never** wear other shoes or slippers or walk barefoot.
- Socks should be cotton or wool and wear them "inside out" so that the seams don't rub your toes.
- Before putting on socks and shoes check inside them for anything which may rub (stones etc.).
- Check your feet for any signs of damage when you take your shoes and socks off.
- Any dry skin can be treated with a moisturising cream such as E45 (available at the Chemist, Supermarket or on prescription).
- If you cut your own nails follow the shape of the nail, don't cut them too short or let them grow too long.
- You cannot feel heat or cold so be very careful when bathing – test the water with your elbow in case your hands are also affected.
- Remove hot water bottles before going to bed.
- Don't sit too close to fires or heaters.
- Remember you will need to see the chiropodist very regularly and should contact them or the Nurse or GP at your Surgery/clinic if you develop any other ulcers. Do this **urgently** if there are any signs of infection, swelling, heat or redness.



## Arterial Disease

### Poor Circulation

Diabetes has affected the blood vessels to your feet and you have poor circulation.

Any damage is likely to lead to an ulcer which can be slow to heal.

To help to preserve the circulation keep your diabetes under good control. Your doctor may have prescribed you with aspirin or other anticoagulant to help the blood flow and most importantly **“Stop smoking and keep walking”**.

An annual foot examination will detect any further problems.

**The following advice will help you.**

### **Advice to protect your feet**

- Shoes are the main cause of damage to your feet.
- You will need to buy shoes with soft uppers and no hard seams. Lace-ups are good because they hold your feet firmly in place.
- Have your feet measured for the correct length, width and depth.
- Your problems may mean that you need extra protection. If this is so you will need to be referred for prescription shoes. These will be specially fitted or made by the Orthotist.
- You will be given two pairs and should keep them in good condition by returning them for repair at the Orthotic Department when necessary.

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- Socks should be cotton or wool and wear them "inside out" so that the seams do not rub your toes.
- Before putting on socks and shoes check inside them for anything which may rub (stones, hard seams etc.).
- Check your feet daily for any signs of damage and when you take your shoes and socks off.
- If you cannot see your feet ask someone to check them for you.

- You should never wear other shoes or slippers or walk barefoot and risk damaging your feet.
- Keep your feet clean by washing everyday and dry thoroughly in-between your toes.
- Any dry skin can be treated with a moisturising cream such as

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- Do not use any products on your feet unless advised by your podiatrist.
- Constant temperature is better for your feet. Do not try to warm them by the fire, radiator or with a hot water bottle.
- You will need to see your NHS podiatrist regularly and will be seen at your local health centre or by the Specialist Diabetic Foot team.
- Should you experience any of the below contact your Specialist Foot team, doctor, podiatrist or practice nurse urgently:
  - a cut or break in the skin that does not begin to heal in a few days
  - If your foot or leg becomes red, hot, swollen or painful
  - If you discover oozing from your foot or leg

**Rapid treatment can prevent  
serious problems**