

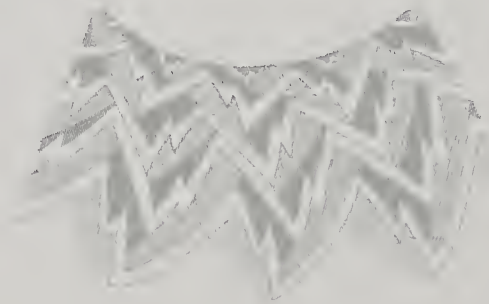
# Taking Care of Your Feet



**Indian Health Service Division of  
Diabetes Treatment and Prevention**

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**“I depend on  
my feet, and  
want to take care  
of them.”**

# **Taking care of your feet**

High blood sugar can cause damage to your feet.

**You can prevent damage to your feet.**

This booklet will help you learn how to take care of your feet.



# How do foot problems happen?

Some people with high blood sugar

- lose feeling in their feet
- have poor blood supply to their legs and feet.

Legs and feet can be damaged. Some people can lose a toe or foot.

**“I repair water lines, mow grass, do whatever needs to be done around the tribe.**

**My feet are important.”**







**Ask a friend or family member to look at your feet if you cannot.**

## **Can you prevent foot problems?**

Yes! Here are some things you can do:

- Look at your feet daily. Be sure to look between your toes.
- Ask a friend or family member to look at your feet if you have poor eyesight or cannot bend over.
- Use a hand mirror to help you look at your feet and between your toes.

Daily care can prevent loss of a toe, foot or leg.



**“Each day  
I look at  
my feet,  
and check  
between  
my toes.”**



## **What should you look for?**

You can prevent damage to your feet by looking for

- blisters
- cuts
- scratches
- red or black spots
- ingrown toenails
- dryness.

Look at your feet and between your toes.

**If you see any damage to your feet, show your health care provider the changes.**





# What is a good way to wash feet?

Wash your feet daily in warm water. Use mild soap and rinse well.

Check the water temperature with your arm or elbow before washing. Water should feel lukewarm, not hot.

Dry your feet by patting dry. Be sure to dry between your toes.

Put lotion on your feet to keep skin soft. Lotion prevents cracking and drying. Do not put lotion between your toes.

Look at your feet and between your toes.



**Wash feet daily,  
and use lotion to  
keep skin soft.**

# More ways to prevent foot damage

Here are some more things you can do to protect your feet.

File or cut your toenails straight across.

You can damage your feet if you cut your own calluses or corns. See your health care provider for these problems.

Use only medicine from the clinic on your feet for corns, bunions, calluses, cuts or scratches. Store medicine may hurt your feet.

**Cut your toenails straight across. See your health care provider if you need help.**







**“I wear cotton socks and change them each day.”**

## **Socks protect your feet**

Wear socks each day. Socks help cushion and protect your feet. Change your socks each day.

Keep your feet warm with socks. Do not use heating pads or hot water bottles.

Keep your feet dry. Cotton socks are best.

Wear socks without seams, holes or mends.

Do not use elastic garters. Knee socks should not leave marks on your skin. All socks should fit loosely.

**Choose shoes that  
are flat and have  
rounded toes.**



## **Shoes protect your feet**

Always wear your shoes indoors and outdoors. You can cut, burn or bruise your feet by walking barefoot.

Wear shoes that fit. Tie shoe laces loosely.

Wear shoes with rounded toes. Pointed boots or shoes can cause damage to your feet. Do not wear sandals or open-toe shoes.

Wear flat or low-heeled shoes. High heels can cause damage to your feet.

Check your shoes for small stones, nail points or torn linings.

Keep your shoes on during powwows and celebrations.

Wear shoes when walking on beaches or near pools.



# Choosing new shoes

Make sure your shoes fit the shape of your foot. Choose rounded toes and flat or low-heeled shoes. Shoes made of canvas or leather are best.

Break in new shoes a little at a time. Wear them for 1-2 hours each day for at least a week.

Wear socks to help cushion or protect your feet.

Check your feet for redness, sores or blisters. Your shoes should not cause sores or blisters.



**“I pay close attention to my feet and shoes. I wear only flat, comfortable shoes.”**



# If you get a blister

If you get a blister or sore, see your health care provider. Show your health care provider your foot. Bring your shoes and socks with you.

**You can prevent damage to your feet.**

**“I try  
different shoes.  
If they don’t fit,  
I don’t wear them.  
I see my health  
care provider if  
I get a sore  
on my foot.”**







**Check your feet  
daily for cuts and  
scratches.**

## **Caring for cuts and scratches**

Wash each small cut or scratch with soap and water.

Do not put adhesive tape or bandaids on your skin. Tape and bandaids can damage the skin on your feet.

Use gauze bandages for small cuts or scratches.

**Look at cuts and scratches daily. Call your health care provider if cuts or scratches do not get better in three days.**

# Your health care provider can help

Check with your health care provider if you have any foot or health problems.

**Your feet are important. See your health care provider if you have any foot problems.**









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