Foot Health Advice for Patients with Diabetes

1. Check your feet daily for cuts, blisters, bruises, cracked-skin, color changes, and swelling. Use a mirror to inspect the soles of both feet. If you have impaired vision ask a relative or friend to check your feet for you. Report any foot injuries to your doctor without delay.

2. Wash cuts and grazes twice a day with soap and water; apply an antiseptic cream, and cover with a sterile band-aid. Seek medical attention immediately.

3. To avoid burns, test the temperature with your elbow before you place your feet into hot water, and do not place your feet close to warm radiators.

4. To protect your feet from injury, avoid barefoot walking as much as possible, even around the house.

5. Buy new shoes late in the day when your feet are more swollen. Make sure shoes fit well; do not rub the toes or the back of your heels. Try to buy shoes without seams inside.

6. Before you put on your shoes, check inside for stones, sharp objects, and rough places inside the uppers and on the sock liners.

7. Wear socks as much as possible to help prevent blisters. Make sure hosiery is not too tight, and wash your socks or stockings daily.

8. Wash your feet with soap and water every day, taking care to clean between your toes. Dry your feet well, especially between the toes. The daily use of a non-allergic, moisturizing cream or lotion will help keep the skin from cracking, especially around the heels. Do not apply cream between the toes as moisture may cause blisters.

9. If you have flat feet, bunions, hammertoes, or any other structural foot problems, consider orthotic insoles made especially for diabetics. Look for shoes with a deep toe box, to prevent rubbing on the tops of your toes. Your doctor may recommend custom-molded diabetic shoes, especially if you have a history of a recurrent ulcer.

10. Avoid impact aerobics and opt for a more gentle exercise program that reduces the amount of pressure on your feet; and make sure you have the right shoe for whatever fitness activity you choose.

11. Stop smoking now! Nicotine reduces the blood flow to your feet, which may increase the risk of foot ulcers.

12. Do not miss taking your insulin or other prescribed medicines. Use a glucometer to check your blood sugar as advised by your doctor.

13. Have regular checkups with your doctor to make sure all aspects of staying healthy—weight, blood pressure, blood sugar, etc.—are well managed.

14. See your podiatrist at least twice a year for a comprehensive foot check up. Early diagnosis and treatment of a foot problem is always best.

This information has been prepared by Raymond J. Anthony, FCPodS, DPodM.
Podiatric Consultant
Spenco Medical Corporation.
www.spenco.com