

"My Diabetic Foot Ulcer"



Information on how to care for you or your loved one's Diabetic Foot Ulcer

What is a Diabetic Foot Ulcer?

A diabetic foot ulcer or DFU is a sore on the foot of a person who has diabetes. People with diabetes are at more risk for getting a foot ulcer as they may have nerve damage in their feet. This nerve damage can cause loss of feeling in the feet, a change in shape of the foot, and can dry out the skin. People with diabetes may also have narrow or blocked blood vessels in their legs. This poor blood flow can slow healing and increase risk of infection. Diabetic Foot Ulcers are a serious health concern and may lead to amputation.

What are the signs of nerve damage?

Shooting, stabbing, burning, tingling, numbness, and/or throbbing of the feet.

What are the signs of a Diabetic Foot Ulcer?

- Callus
- Blister
- Crack in the skin of your foot
- Red, warm, tender spot that does not go away

Daily Foot Care

Every day you should clean and check your feet in a well-lit area. Wear your glasses if you need them. Wash your feet in warm tap water and a mild soap, rinse, and dry well – especially between your toes. Look at the top and bottom of your feet, heels, and between your toes. You can use a mirror to help see the bottom of your foot. Look for moisture, blisters, cracks, calluses, open sores, dry skin, changes in skin colour, and swelling. Feel your feet for changes in temperature. Next, smell your feet for odour. Once done, moisturize your feet with a non-scented lotion - but NOT between your toes. Let your health care provider know of any problems right away!

I Found a NEW Diabetic Foot Ulcer!

If there is redness, heat, swelling, and/or pain around the ulcer (signs of infection), see your health care provider right away! If the ulcer is clean, follow your daily foot care instructions, cover the ulcer with a Band-Aid that closes on all sides, and make an appointment to see your doctor or nurse practitioner. Change the Band-Aid every day or if it falls off/leaks. Try to limit walking as this will prevent healing.

What can YOU do to HELP?

You are an important member of your wound care team! You can help prevent new sores by doing the following:

- Keep your bandage clean and dry
- Change your bandage as instructed or have someone help you
- Follow the daily foot care instructions
- Look and feel inside your shoes before you put them on
- Change your socks every day
- Never go barefoot and avoid flip-flops, narrow shoes, high heels, Crocs, and thin soled shoes
- Wear your socks and footwear EVERY TIME your feet touch the ground (NO EXCUSE)
- Have a professional help you select shoes and replace shoes when they are worn out
- Consider cutting back or quitting smoking
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Take your medications as prescribed
- Have a professional cut your toenails and care for any corns or calluses
- If you are cutting your toenails, cut them straight across
- Visit your doctor or Nurse Practitioner at least once per year for diabetes check and foot exam