



Lesson 7: Jump in Feet First Foot Care for Diabetes

Getting Ready

1. Review Lesson Plan before each session.
2. Copy handouts and follow-up questions.
3. Gather supplies needed for lesson and activities.

Suggested Supplies

1. Mirror
2. Examples of lotions to use: Dermal Therapy
3. Examples shoes and socks to buy.
4. Nail clippers

Beginning the Lesson

1. Introduce yourself by name and the organization you represent.
2. Summarize the lesson by giving the objectives. Let the group know the lesson will be informal and they can ask questions anytime.

Objectives

Participants will learn the importance of:

1. Preventing diabetes foot problems.
2. Performing daily foot care.
3. Preventing injuries.
4. Selecting shoes and socks carefully.
5. Problems to report to your doctor or podiatrist.

Script

Fifteen percent of people with diabetes will experience a foot ulcer and many with a foot ulcer will require amputation. Diabetes is the leading cause of non-accident related amputation of the feet or legs. At least half of these amputations might be prevented through simple foot care practices. Today we are going to learn what these practices are. First, we will discuss how to check your feet daily, what you should do to protect your feet, and how to increase your circulation. We will discuss how to prevent injuries and how to select the proper shoes and socks. Finally, we will point out what problems should be reported to your doctor or podiatrist.



Perform Daily Foot Care

1. Wash your feet daily with warm water (not hot) to reduce bacteria. Rinse well and dry carefully between your toes.
2. Do not soak your feet since soaking will make your skin dry and cause the skin to crack.
3. Apply a thin coat of skin lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes (as this can increase the risk for fungal and other infections of the skin).
4. Creams/lotions with urea and/or lactic acid work well. Example: Dermal Therapy.
5. If you can reach your toenails, trim them each week or when needed. Trim nails straight across and smooth with an emory board or nail file. Your toenails will be easier to trim if you cut them following a bath or shower. If you cannot reach them, ask someone to do it for you.
6. Check your feet daily for sores, blisters, injuries, discolored areas (for example, red, blue or black areas), cuts or cracks in the skin, or signs of infection (redness, swelling, warmth).
7. Use a mirror to examine the bottom of your feet and check between your toes. Use a magnifying glass if you have difficulty seeing. You can also have someone else check them for you.
8. Change socks daily or more often if your feet sweat.
9. See a podiatrist or a nurse specializing in foot care for a yearly foot care exam.
10. Now that we have discussed daily foot care we are now going to talk about how we can increase circulation.

Promote Circulation

1. Exercise- walking is a great way to promote circulation.
2. Avoid or decrease smoking. Smoking narrows your blood vessels and restricts the blood supply to your feet and legs.
3. Don't cross your legs for long periods of time.
4. Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides (blood fats) under control to help keep arteries clear.



5. Keep your feet and legs warm. If your feet feel cold at night, you can wear socks to bed, but don't use hot water bottles or heating pads---if you have any loss of sensation, you may burn your feet without realizing it.

Now we are going to talk about how to prevent injuries to your feet.

Prevent Injury

1. Don't go barefoot (even in the bathroom at night). Use slippers and shoes to protect your feet from injury. Even wear "aqua shoes" in the water.
2. Check your shoes before putting them on for torn linings and foreign objects like stones.
3. Wear suitable footwear that fits properly. We will discuss this in a little more detail later.
4. Wash any cuts, scratches or other skin injury with warm water and soap.

Select Shoes and Socks carefully

1. Good walking shoes should be worn as often as possible.
2. Try on shoes in the late afternoon or at the end of the day when your feet are the largest size.
3. Choose soft materials that can breath (for example, leather instead of plastic).
4. Allow adequate room between the end of your toes and your shoes (1/2 to 5/8 inch). Check this while you are standing up.
5. Buy shoes with good support, good treads and cushioned insoles.
6. Wear 100% cotton or wool socks to absorb perspiration. Some athletic socks are specially designed to allow sweat to evaporate, and would also be a good choice.
7. You may need special shoes if your feet have serious problems.

Work with Your Doctor

1. Have your doctor check your feet.
2. Taking your shoes and socks off at every office visit will remind your doctor to check your feet.
3. Have your doctor check for the sense of feeling and pulses in your feet at least once a year.



Report the following to your doctor

1. Ingrown toenails
2. Fungal nail infections
3. Warts that spread or cause pain when walking
4. Thick toenails that are difficult to cut
5. Corns and calluses
6. Cuts, blisters, or bruises that don't disappear after one day
7. Call your doctor immediately for:

Serious foot injuries

Infections (pus, swelling, pain) or discolored areas - for example, if a toe becomes red or blue.

Remember: look carefully at your feet everyday, and report problems to your doctor right away. Don't wait for small problems to become major. These are the only feet you'll ever have. Most of all, manage your diabetes well and put your feet first.

The Diabetes Alphabet

Today we talked about the do's and don'ts of foot care. As we close today, let's recite our diabetes alphabet:

A for **A1c Test**- Check twice a year

B for **Blood Pressure**- Check at each doctor's visit

C for **Cholesterol**- Check once a year

D for **Daily Exercise**- Be physically active every day

E for **Eating Well**- Take down portion sizes, stay on your meal schedule

F for **Foot Care**- Check your feet for sores, blisters, or injuries every day

S for **Sugar Testing**- Check your blood sugar daily or as recommended by your doctor



References

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Feet Can Last a Lifetime: A Health Care Provider's Guide to Prevention Diabetes Foot Problems.
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Primary Author: Susan Stone RD, LD
NOAHnet@uga.edu

Primary Reviewers: Mary Ann Johnson, PhD, Joan G. Fischer, Ph.D., R.D., L.D.,
Tommy Johnson, PharmD, Marilyn O. Wright, MS, RD, LD,

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