

# Foot Examinations for People with Diabetes



## **The main goal of a foot examination is to determine if you are at risk for diabetes-related foot complications.**

- If you have diabetes, you are at risk of developing foot problems as a result of nerve damage (called neuropathy), poor blood flow or changes in the shape of your feet or toes.
- These problems can put your feet at risk of developing calluses, blisters, wounds or infections that may ultimately lead to amputation.
- The good news is that most amputations are preventable with regular screening, proper foot care and wearing properly fitted shoes.
- Regular foot examination can help both you and your healthcare professional identify potential risk factors as they arise and manage them in a timely fashion, thereby preventing or delaying any further complications.
- The frequency of a foot examination is determined by how high-risk your feet are for wounds, and is agreed upon by you and your healthcare professional.

## Your healthcare professional will *look, feel and ask*.

### LOOK

**Nails:** Thickened, ingrown or infected.

**Skin:** Callused, blistered, cracked, wounded or infected.

**Foot structure:** Deformities or swelling.

**Redness:** This can occur as a result of infection, inflammation or circulation changes.

**Shoes:** Must be supportive, fit properly. As well, look for any foreign objects or rough edges.

### FEEL

**Foot temperature:** A difference in temperature between feet can alert the healthcare professional to infection, lack of blood circulation or inflammation.

**Pulses:** To determine if the blood supply to the foot is sufficient to maintain foot health.

**Range of motion:** To check the mobility of foot joints – especially the first toe joint – to ensure that the pressure is balanced throughout the whole foot.

**Sensation:** A loss of sensation (neuropathy) can be determined if a patient is unable to feel a monofilament when applied to his/her foot.

### ASK

The following four questions are asked to determine if there is a potential loss of sensation in the foot:

1. Do your feet ever feel numb?
2. Do they tingle?
3. Do they ever feel like they are burning?
4. Do they feel like insects are crawling on them?

## **Other key questions a healthcare professional may ask are:**

- How long have you had diabetes?
- Is your blood glucose under control? (Your blood glucose should be between 4.0 and 7.0 mmol/L before eating, and 5.0 and 10.0 mmol/L two hours after eating.) Always consult with your physician or endocrinologist regarding your optimal blood glucose levels.
- Do you have a history of foot ulcers or amputation?

## **Key things to remember:**

- Check your feet daily.
- Visit your healthcare professional regularly.
- If you detect a crack, blister or wound, seek help from your foot care team immediately!

For more information, please visit our website:

[www.woundscanada.ca](http://www.woundscanada.ca)



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