

The Launch of Diabetic Foot Canada:

An Initiative Aimed at Reducing the Burden of Diabetic Foot Complications

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Diabetes is the fastest-growing medical condition in the country, affecting more than 2.7 million Canadians who currently live with this disease. The number of Canadians diagnosed with diabetes is predicted to rise at an alarming rate. The statistics for Canada's Aboriginal population are even more concerning, with rates three to five times higher than those of the general population.¹

About 405,000 Canadians, or 15 per cent of those with diabetes, will develop a foot ulcer.²

Foot ulcers and other such diabetic complications are taking a growing, needless toll in lost limbs and lives. Diabetic foot ulcers have a considerable amount of negative impact on



**Diabetic
Foot
Canada**

patients' psychological, social and physical well-being. Not only are they susceptible to chronic wounds, infections and delayed healing, thousands each year will face the depressing consequences of losing their limbs through amputation. It is arguable that 85% of these cases are preventable.^{2,3}

Addressing the Issue

For two decades the Canadian Association of Wound Care (CAWC) has been leading the charge in wound treatment and prevention across Canada. To address the specific issue of com-

plications in the diabetic foot, the CAWC is now heading a multi-partner initiative called Diabetic Foot Canada (DFC), working with several government bodies and not-for-profit organizations such

as the Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Diabetes Association, Canadian Home Care Association, Canadian Federation of Podiatric Medicine, Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and Ontario Hospital Association. DFC is focused solely on diabetic foot disease, with a strong tie-in to the important etiological issues of diabetes.

Did You Know

Individuals with diabetes are 23 times more likely to be hospitalized than someone without diabetes.⁴

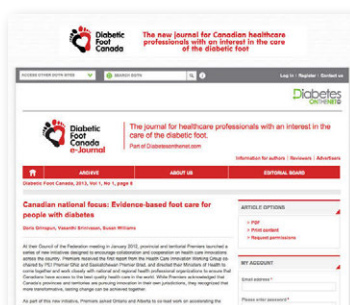
With this singular focus and by aligning the interests of the Canadian diabetic foot community and multiple levels of governments, this initiative has the power to effect significant change in the prevention and treatment of diabetic foot ulcers across the country.

DFC Programs

Currently, Diabetic Foot Canada offers the following programs:



Diabetic Foot Canada Journal (DFCJ): An online, peer-reviewed quarterly targeted to health-care professionals, including nurses and physicians, who treat patients with diabetic foot ulcers. Article topics in the first issue include exploring the importance of the inter-professional team when caring for patients with diabetic foot ulcers, the impact and results of the addition of a bedside foot ulcer screening tool and an overview of RNAO's newly released second edition of a best practice guideline (BPG) related to the treatment and management of patients with diabetic foot ulcers. DFCJ is available at diabeticfootcanadajournal.com.



Diabetic Foot Canada – Stakeholder Community (VPN Social Portal): An electronic DFC community (a Facebook-like community for professionals) at www.diabeticfootcommunity.ca will allow people to connect with each other and access documents relevant to their work on preventing diabetic foot complications.

Workshops and master classes focused on diabetic foot complications: The highly interactive workshops are led by an interprofessional faculty that focuses on the prevention and management of diabetic foot complications. The goal is to deliver knowledge and attitude change around the assessment and planning of diabetic foot care in a more systematic approach. The College of Family Physicians of Canada has accredited this workshop for up to 5.75 Mainpro-M1 CME credits.

To arrange for a workshop in your area, contact Mariam Botros at botros.mariam@gmail.com. (See "A Workshop on the Prevention and Management of Diabetic Foot Complications" on page 26 for an overview of the inaugural event.)



PEP Talk: Diabetes, Healthy Feet and You: A peer-led, educational program on the prevention and management of foot ulcers consists of workshops led by trained volunteer peer leaders (living with diabetes and neuropathy) supported by health-care professionals, using technology such as a web portal and electronic reminders for community participants. To arrange for the PEP program in your area, contact Mariam Botros at botros.mariam@gmail.com.

Working Together

A key to success for DFC lies in the partnering that ensures a multidisciplinary perspective and a strong patient voice. As the initiative grows and additional partnerships are confirmed, other elements of research, policy and education will be added.

The initiative utilizes the latest technology, evidence and national teams of interprofessional experts to provide educa-

Did You Know

Diabetic Foot Canada is designed to be the national go-to program for online information and education for clinicians and patients in support of effective self-monitoring, early detection and prevention and treatment of costly and potentially life-threatening diabetic foot wounds among Canadians.

Did You Know

Foot complications in persons with diabetes cost the Canadian health-care system more than \$150-million each year. With each new case of diabetes, the impact on the health-care system includes increases in emergency visits, complication rates, ulcerations, infections, amputations, dependence upon the help of others and an inability to work.²

tion, disseminate best evidence and educational tools and raise awareness of the importance of preventing diabetic foot complications and amputations. Ultimately, the goal of DFC is

to improve the lives of persons with diabetes, improve quality outcomes and reduce health-care costs.

For more information about Diabetic Foot Canada, please visit diabeticfootcanada.com. 

Parts of this article were adapted from an article written by Douglas Queen and Greg Archibald that was originally published in Hospital News (July 2013). Reprinted with permission.

References

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2. The Council of the Federation, Health Care Innovation Working Group. From innovation to action: The first report of the Health Care Innovation Working Group [Internet]. Ottawa: Council of the Federation; 2012 Jul [cited 2013 Sep 28]. 28 p. Available from: http://councilofthefederation.ca/phocadownload/publications/health_innovation_report-e-web.pdf.
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A new online journal has launched!



The **Canadian Association of Wound Care** and the **Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario** are pleased to announce that **Diabetic Foot Canada** is now available online at **www.diabeticfootcanadajournal.com**

This innovative publication will address an interdisciplinary audience of health-care professionals who care for people with diabetes, to support their practice and to improve patient outcomes.

Highlights of the first issue include:

- Exploring the importance of the interprofessional team when caring for patients with diabetic foot ulcers.
- The impact and results of the addition of a bedside foot ulcer screening tool.
- An overview of RNAO's newly released, second edition best practice guideline related to the treatment and management of patients with diabetic foot ulcers.

We are excited about this new initiative, and thank all our partners who helped with the launch.

We encourage our readers to send us your feedback and submit publications.

