

Steps to Healthy Feet

Since you have diabetes, you may have decreased blood flow to your feet. Decreased blood flow and elevated blood sugars can damage nerves which leads to numbness in your feet. When your feet are numb, you may injure them without even knowing it. This can result in infections and sores which don't heal well. Taking good care of your feet every day is the best way to prevent problems and keep healthy.

How to Take Care of Your Feet

- ✓ Check and wash your feet daily. If you have trouble bending, use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet. Make sure to dry well and check-in between toes.
- ✓ Let your provider know right away if you discover any sores, red areas, calluses, drainage, or unusual foot odor.
- ✓ Prevent dry skin and cracks by applying lotion or petroleum jelly to the top and bottom of your feet a few times a week.
- ✓ Avoid going barefoot, even inside, to avoid accidental injury.
- ✓ Buy new shoes at the end of the day when your feet are most swollen.
- ✓ Break-in new shoes gradually by wearing them for a few hours each day (1 hour the first day, 2 hours the second day, etc.).
- ✓ Inspect shoes for rough spots, torn linings, or other objects which could injure your feet. Make sure there is enough room to wiggle your toes.
- ✓ Use diabetes socks that are free of seams and not too tight around the calf.
- ✓ Since your feet may not sense temperatures that are too hot or cold, you need to protect them. Wear warm socks or lined shoes if your feet become cold. Avoid heating pads, Jacuzzis, and hot water bottles. Use sunscreen to avoid sunburn.
- ✓ Rest with feet elevated, especially if they are swollen.
- ✓ No bathroom surgery (this includes trimming calluses with a razor or liquid corn and callus removers). This can lead to injury.
- ✓ Have a foot doctor trim your toenails if you cannot see or feel your feet, you cannot reach your feet, your toenails are thick or yellowed or your nails curve and grow into the skin.
- ✓ If you smoke, STOP. Smoking decreases the oxygen supply to your blood vessels and greatly increases the risk of foot sores.

How to Cut Your Toenails

1. Soften toenails in warm water before attempting to cut them. An ideal time would be after a bath. If your toenails are dry and split easily, put lotion or petroleum jelly on them and wait 5 minutes before cutting.
2. Use only toenail clippers. Do not use scissors to trim toenails.
3. Take small cuts across the nail. Start at the corner, cutting the nail straight across, even with the end of the toe (not too short)
4. Do not cut into corners. This may cause an ingrown toenail and infection.
5. File any ragged edges with an emery board.
6. If you cannot cut your nails because they are too tough or thick, see your provider for guidelines.
7. Use only a Q-tip or washcloth to clean under the toenails.
8. If you cannot see or reach your feet, ask for help. A family member can help inspect your feet or you can use a mirror to view the bottom of your feet. If you have limited vision and or live alone, your doctor can evaluate your feet and refer you to a Podiatrist (foot doctor) if necessary.



Trim your toenails straight across and smooth the corners with a nail file.

Eight Steps to Healthy Feet

1. CLEAN!

- Clean and check your feet daily!
- Wash with warm, **not hot**, water and mild soap and washcloth.
- Dry well, especially between toes.

3. CONDITION!

- Use a moisturizer or cream as needed for dry skin. Choose one without perfume.
- Put lotion on top and bottom of feet (not between toes).

5. COVER!

- Wear closed shoes, to protect your feet.
- Make sure they fit correctly and don't rub.
- Wear clean socks with shoes.

7. CALL!

- Call your provider if you have any pain, swelling, soreness, or changes in your feet.

2. CHECK!

- Check each day for blisters, corns, calluses, scratches, color changes, swelling, and sores.

4. CARE!

- Let your provider or a Podiatrist take care of calluses.
- Have your feet examined by your provider regularly.
- Tell your provider about any foot issues you are having.

6. USE CAUTION!

- Protect your feet from sunburn.
- Avoid burns from heating pads, hot water bottles, hot tubs, and Jacuzzis.
- Have a well-lit path to your bathroom at night.

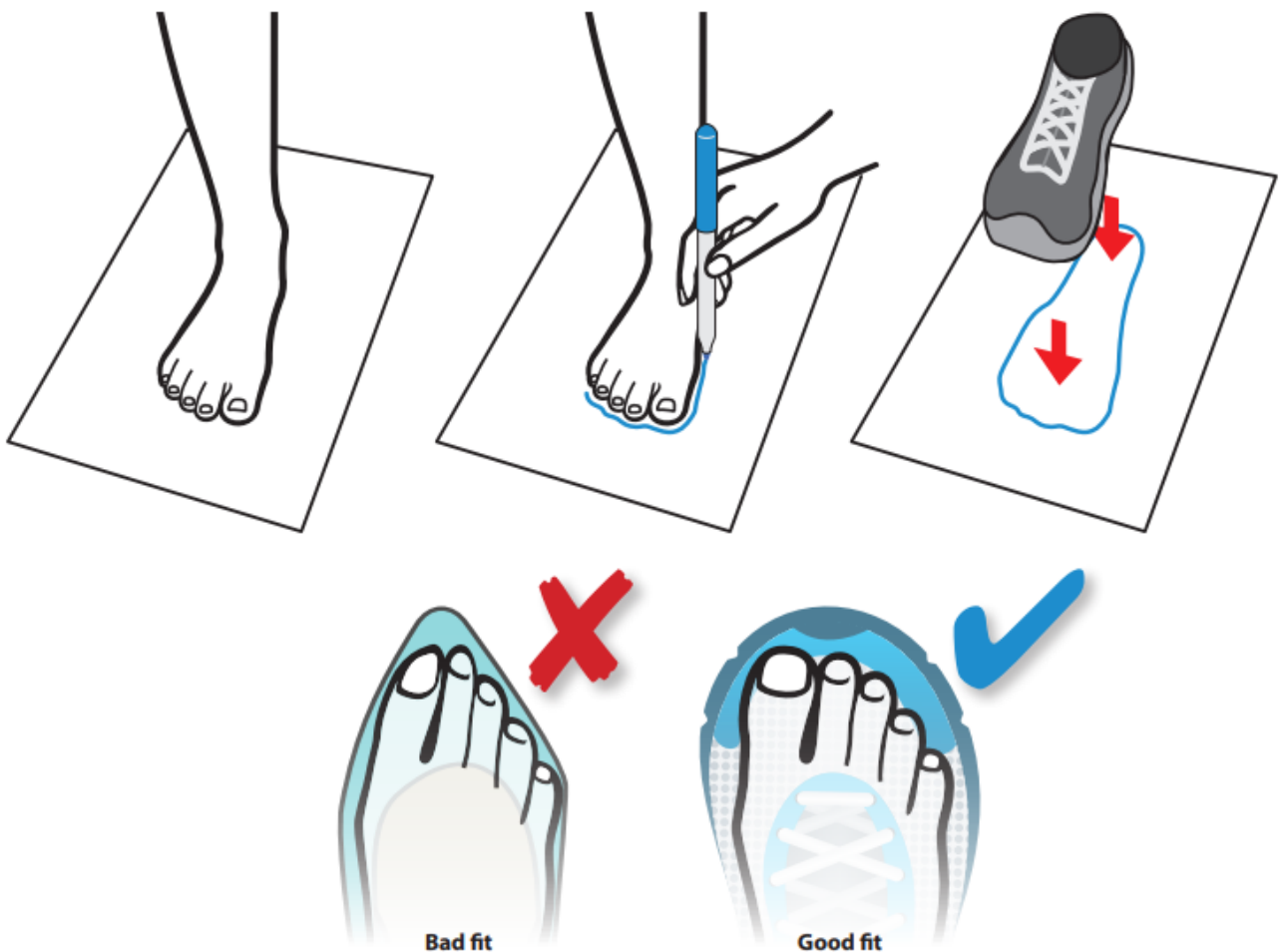
8. CONTROL!

- Keep your blood sugar on target and stop smoking to prevent foot problems.
- **How to Cut Your Toenails**

Shoe Fit Test

Use a blank sheet of paper to trace an outline of each of your feet. This will help you determine if your shoes fit properly.

1. Remove your shoes and socks.
2. While standing, place one foot on the page and trace around the edge of your foot with a pen. Hold the pen snug to your foot and keep it vertical. Your care partner can help if you cannot reach your feet.
3. Remove your foot from the page and place your shoe on top of the tracing. **If any part of the tracing line is visible from under your shoe, your shoe is too small.**
4. Repeat this test for your other foot.



[Image from Wounds Canada](#) – Caring for your Feet