

DIABETES & FOOT CARE

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder in which the body either cannot produce insulin or cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Two million Canadians have diabetes and 700,000 have it but don't know it. Foot and lower leg complications account for the most hospital admissions in people with diabetes.

When blood sugar levels are not well controlled, damage can result to the nerve function causing gradual loss of feeling in the limbs. Loss of the feeling in the feet is called neuropathy. The patient may complain of pain, burning, and tingling in the feet. Because people with diabetes lose the feeling in their feet, they are unable to detect when an injury occurs. A small seemingly innocent cut, if left untreated can cause an infection, and can lead to life threatening situations.

Foot and leg problems are the most common reason for hospitalization in people with diabetes. Regular foot care is key in the prevention of complications associated with diabetes. The foot care nurses play an important role assessing people who may be at risk.

What can I do?

- Good blood sugar control
- Routine visual inspection of your feet
- Stop smoking
- Healthy lifestyle choices
- Proper fitting footwear
- Cut toenails straight across
- Avoid going barefoot or wearing open toe shoes
- Protect your feet from heat and cold
- Never use over-the-counter medicated corn/callus/wart preparations
- Do not use hot water bottles or heating pads

If you are looking for a foot care nurse, refer to the foot care nurse website at www.footcarenurse.ca



Information provided by:

**Manitoba Association
of Foot Care Nurses**

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