

DIABETES EDUCATION:

10 STEPS TOWARD FOOT HEALTH

1

Check your feet every day for cuts, redness, swelling, sores, blisters, corns, calluses, or any other change to the skin or nails. Use a mirror if you can't see the bottom of your feet, or ask a family member to help.

2

Wash your feet every day in warm (not hot) water. Don't soak your feet. Dry your feet completely and apply lotion to the top and bottom—but not between your toes, which could lead to infection.

3

Avoid injury by always wearing shoes and socks or slippers—even when you're inside. Check that there aren't any pebbles or other objects inside your shoes and that the lining is smooth. Never go barefoot.

4

Wear shoes that fit well. For the best fit, try on new shoes at the end of the day when your feet tend to be larger. Break in your new shoes slowly—wear them for an hour or two a day at first until they're completely comfortable. Always wear socks with your shoes.

5

Trim your toenails straight across and gently smooth any sharp edges with a nail file. Have a foot doctor (podiatrist) trim your toenails if you can't see or reach your feet.

6

Do not try to remove corns or calluses yourself, and do not use over-the-counter products to remove them—they could burn your skin.

7

Have your feet checked at each healthcare visit. Have a complete exam every year (more often if you have nerve damage) done by your primary care provider or a foot doctor. The exam should include checking for any loss of feeling and blood flow in your feet.

8

Keep the blood flowing. Put your feet up when you're sitting, and wiggle your toes for a few minutes several times throughout the day.

9

Choose foot-friendly activities like walking, riding a bike, or swimming. Check with your provider about which activities are best for you and any you should avoid.

10

Be sure to ask your provider what else you can do to keep your feet healthy.