There Is Hope for Your Feet!

For people with diabetes, foot care is very important. Small injuries can cause foot sores, which can lead to amputation. But by taking care of your feet every day, you can prevent these serious problems. You can start by:

- Watching your blood sugar levels
- Attending all of your doctors’ appointments
- Examining your feet every day
- Keeping the weight off your foot if you have a foot sore

How Diabetes Affects Your Feet

Foot complications are one of the most common diabetes-related causes of hospitalization. They can go untreated for a long time because people with diabetes often have nerve damage that causes them to lose feeling in their feet, making them unable to feel the wound. Many people are unaware of their risk for foot problems and don’t know how to take proper care of their feet. Proactively checking for foot sores, blisters, or swelling can lessen the possibility of developing a diabetic foot ulcer.

What Causes a DFU?

If you have diabetes, having high blood sugar for a long time can lead to damaged nerves in your feet. This condition, called peripheral neuropathy, can cause you to lose feeling in your feet and may prevent you from noticing injuries, including:

- Sores caused by repetitive minor trauma (such as long walks)
- Wounds caused by a single major trauma (like scraping your foot, stepping on rocks, putting your feet in hot water, cutting toenails incorrectly, wearing shoes that don’t fit properly)
- Foot problems such as calluses and hammertoes

If left untreated, these injuries can turn into DFUs. Additionally, diabetes patients may have poor blood flow to their feet, which slows the healing process and increases risk of infection and amputation.

Understanding Diabetic Foot Sores

What Are Diabetic Foot Ulcers?

Diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs) are sores or wounds on the feet that occur in people who have diabetes, a condition where blood sugar levels are unusually high. About 15% of people with diabetes will develop DFUs in their lifetime. If left untreated, DFUs may not heal and can become infected. This can lead to toe, foot, or even leg amputation. However, diabetic foot ulcers can be easily treated using the advanced modalities available at an Advanced Wound Care Center.

Cuts, sores, and blisters are all considered DFUs if you have diabetes.

Are You at Risk?

You are particularly at risk of developing DFUs if:

- Your blood sugar levels are too high
- You have nerve damage that causes a loss of feeling in your feet
- You experience changes in the shape of your feet
November is American Diabetes Month

November is a time to raise awareness of diabetes prevention and control and encourage individuals, families and communities to help stop diabetes.

What you can do to lower your chances of getting type 2 diabetes:

- Eat healthy
- Watch your weight
- Be active
- Control your blood sugar and cholesterol

This November make an appointment with your doctor to get your feet examined.

People with diabetes can play an active role in preventing diabetic foot ulcers by talking to their healthcare providers. There are important questions that you can ask your doctor to reduce the possible harm of foot sores and prevent future DFUs from developing.

Ask Your Doctor:

- Can you inspect my feet?
- Am I at risk for developing a diabetic foot ulcer?
- What can I do to prevent a DFU?
- How can I make sure my sores are healing?
- Do I need a prescription medication?
- What kind of exercise should I be doing?

Did you know?

In the United States over 25 million people have diabetes and over 79 million are at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes1

- Every 17 seconds someone is diagnosed with diabetes2
- Individuals with type 2 diabetes are more at risk for developing a diabetic foot ulcer

1. American Diabetes Association, 2011
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011

Some medicines may interfere with the healing of your wound, it is important that your wound care specialist knows if you are taking any medications.

Diabetic foot ulcers are commonly associated with other medical problems. Tell your doctor if you have a problem that you think may affect your wound treatment.

The physicians at Mercy Wound Center can offer the most advanced options in treatment to heal sores quickly. If you have a wound that has not healed in 4 weeks call 319-339-3967.

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