

Diabetic feet & poor circulation



How does diabetes affect your feet?

You're more at risk of developing problems in your feet when you have diabetes. This is because high blood sugars can damage your blood vessels, affecting how blood flows to your legs and feet.

People with diabetes have reduced blood circulation and those who have had diabetes for a long time may have damage to the nerve and blood supply of their feet. Poor circulation also often accompanies age.

Every year thousands of people have toes, feet and even legs, amputated because of diabetes related foot problems. Most of these could have been prevented by proper foot care.

Recognising the symptoms

Nerve damage medically referred to as peripheral neuropathy, has many symptoms. You can stop foot problems getting worse by knowing the signs to look out for. You're looking for:

- a tingling sensation or pins and needles (like numbness)
- pain (burning)
- a dull ache
- shiny, smooth skin on your feet
- loss of feeling in your feet or legs
- swollen feet
- wounds or sores that don't heal
- cramp in your calves when resting or walking
- changes in the colour and shape of your feet
- cold or hot feet
- blisters and cuts that you can see but don't feel
- a foul smell coming from an open wound on your feet

Footcare advice

As well as maintaining healthy feet, diabetics should follow these guidelines:



Never walk barefoot as this may lead to cuts and damage to the skin.



DO NOT SMOKE OR VAPE! This will further reduce blood circulation.



Never sit cross legged as this will further reduce circulation to your feet.



Seek professional help if you notice any breaks, sores, swelling or redness to the skin



Always ensure you wear suitable, well fitted footwear. Shoes which do not fit can cause corns and calluses and increase your risk of infection.



ALWAYS seek professional treatment. **DO NOT** attempt to home treat.



Keep your toenails well maintained, cutting and filing regularly.

Always ensure a foot health check as part of your annual diabetes check