

Patient brochure Diabetic foot syndrome

"A beautiful foot is a great gift of Nature"

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)



Your partner for wound care

Best regards to your feet

What is diabetic foot syndrome?

Blood vessels and *nerves* in the feet are damaged through diabetes. The toes and the feet gradually lose feeling as a result of the destruction of the nerves. Unfortunately, in many cases the diabetic foot syndrome develops gradually and out of sight.

Stimuli such as pain, pressure and temperature will not be noticed, or not until it's too late. This can lead to open wounds on the feet and toes. Massive inflammations of the feet may be a consequence, in the worst-case a toe may have to be amputated. It is important to prevent this.

Your GP or your diabetologist will already have informed you of the risks.



What can you look out for?

- ✓ Examine your feet at least once every day. A mirror can help if you cannot ask anybody else to assist you.
- ✓ Check in particular for redness, internal bleeding, pressure points, cornification, changes, injuries and swelling. Don't forget the spaces between your toes and the skin folds under your feet.
- ✓ When you are breaking in new shoes, or wearing shoes for a longer period (going for a walk, window-shopping, or rambling), have a break, take your shoes off, turn them upside down and empty them. If you use insoles, take them out and empty the shoe (there are often small stones, gravel, pine needles etc. underneath).



Best regards to your feet



Washing your feet? Not in every case!

- If you have a blister or wound on your foot (no matter how large it is), please do *not wash* your foot, *shower* or *bathe*!
- **No** foot baths if you have blisters, wounds, cracking or fungal infestation between the toes (risk of infection)
- If there are **no** blisters, wounds or cracks, use a footbath only with a bath thermometer (max. 35°C)
- Bathe your feet for 3-5 min. (the skin softens too much otherwise, resulting in fungal infections!)
- Brushes and massage gloves are taboo (risk of injury)

Drying your feet after bathing, but how?

- Before drying, remove callouses carefully with a pumice stone
- After bathing, dry your feet very cautiously and carefully (do not rub them)
- With claw and hammer toes, cotton buds are very suitable for the spaces between the toes and skin folds
- Never use a hair dryer to dry your feet!



Best regards to your feet

Looking after your feet, but how?

- Apply moisturising foam (care product with 5-15 % urea) to your feet 1-2 times per day
- Please do not use greasy ointments, oils or zinc paste, because they will dry your feet out
- Consult your doctor if regular care of your feet with moisturising care products does not lead to any improvement. This could be a fungal infection





How should I cut my nails?

- ✓ Please file your nails *straight across* only, this stops the nails growing in
- ✓ Do not cut your nails too short, they should conclude with the tips of your toes
- ✓ Never use scissors or sharp objects on your feet (risk of injury)
- ✓ Obtain foot care from the professionals, e.g. podiatrist (diabetically trained chiropodist licensed by a sickness insurance provider)
- ✓ Never treat ingrowing nails yourself

Best regards to your feet



Stockings? ... But not just any!

- Always wear stockings *inside out* (to stop the seams from pressing)
- No constricting stocking tops
- Make sure that creases do not form in the stocking, this can quickly lead to blisters – don't buy stockings that are too big
- Stockings with a high cotton content in light colours are advantageous, because stains in a light-coloured sock may be a sign of an injury
- Darning stockings is not advisable, because thick darned places press
- **TIP: jogging stockings very rarely have seams**

Say goodbye to going barefoot ...

- Going barefoot, or in your stocking feet, sadly these days are gone
- If you have damaged nerves or circulatory problems you will no longer notice even the smallest crumbs or grains of sand (risk of injury)
- Always wear bathing shoes in swimming baths, at the beach, when swimming in lakes or the sea, even sand heated up by the sun, sharp-edged shells, or hidden pieces of glass or splinters harbour a risk of injury



Best regards to your feet

You now have insoles? Your feet will be pleased!

- Were your insoles prescribed? If yes, they should fit in your shoes perfectly. Get in touch in confidence with your master shoemaker!
- Insoles should be made of breathable, light-coloured material so that it is easier to see dirt and secretions
- Take the insoles out of the shoes every day, preferably in the evening after taking your shoes off
- Remove all pieces of wool from the insoles
- Check for cracks and signs of wear. Consult an orthopaedic shoemaker if you detect any changes



Best regards to your feet



City stroll ... buying shoes ... latte macchiato?

- ✓ Buy shoes only in the afternoon or evening (feet are then thicker than in the morning)
- ✓ Foot check: place your bare foot on a piece of paper (A4), draw the outline while standing and take it to the shoe shop
- ✓ In the shoe shop, place the new shoe on the outline of the foot. This will show you immediately if the shoe fits your feet
- ✓ Break new shoes in slowly (max. 30 min.), then check your feet for blisters or reddening
- ✓ Don't go on a shopping trip or long walks immediately
- ✓ Before putting shoes on, check the insides for foreign bodies or pressing seams

... thought about everything when buying shoes? ... your feet change over time as well!

- Do your feet have enough space?
- Do your feet have enough support in the shoe?
- Does the shoe have a soft upper?
- Does the shoe have inside seams? (Leads to pressure)
- Is the sole thick enough?
- Are the heels too high?
- Is there enough room for the foot and prescribed insoles?



Best regards to your feet

Everything that your feet should *never* come into contact with ...

- *Never* use razor blades, corn planes or nail scissors
- *Never* wear insoles with nubs or structured surfaces
- *Never* wear shoes with high heels
- *Never* use electric heat pads, a hot water bottle, grain pillows or a hairdryer to warm your feet
- *Never* use corn plasters, corn and wart tincture
- *Never* spray ice spray on warts or corns
- As far as possible, don't wear sandals



Harmless injury to your foot?

- Even the smallest wound can be an EMERGENCY!
- Don't lose any time!
- Consult a diabetologist or your GP without delay
- Initial care only with a colourless disinfectant, e.g. Octenisept® wound disinfection spray and plaster



Best regards to your feet

What should you watch out for as well?

- Have your feet examined regularly by your GP or a diabetologist for damage to nerves and circulatory problems
- Always wear suitable footwear, whether working in the garden, the workshop, at work, rambling, sport, at home, going for walks, etc.

**Don't be afraid to ask your doctor about diabetic foot syndrome.
You'll only get answers if you ask questions!**

