



# The **HIGH RISK** Diabetic Foot

It is important for you to take exceptionally good care of your feet. Diabetes is a life-long disease that over time can cause damage to nerves and blood vessels leading to loss of feeling and decreased circulation in your feet.

Any broken or open areas in the skin allow microorganisms (germs) to enter. This can very quickly lead to infection, especially if your blood vessels are no longer healthy and/or your blood glucose is out of control. You may not even know there is a problem if you have lost the feeling in your feet!

You have been given this **High Risk** information sheet because your foot assessment shows that you have at least one of the following:

- Skin Breakdown (open cracks, sores, infection)
- Ulcer (Active)
- Ulcer (Past)
- Amputation
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Care for the “High Risk” Diabetic Foot

- Control your blood glucose.
- Do not smoke!
- Have your healthcare provider examine your feet **at least every 3 to 4 months; more frequently (every 1 to 4 weeks) if you are receiving treatment for open cracks, sores, infection, or ulcers.**
- Check your feet every day. This is more important than ever if you have lost feeling in your feet. Watch for any blisters or sores because **you may not feel them!** Look at the tops and bottoms of both feet. You may need to use a mirror. Check between the toes. If you are unable, have someone examine your feet for you.

...Over

## How to Care for the “High Risk” Diabetic Foot (cont)

- Be very careful when bathing. **You may not be able to feel heat and cold.** Test the water with your elbow in case the nerves in your hands are also affected, or have someone else check the temperature for you.
- Wash your feet daily. **Do not soak your feet! Dry well, especially between the toes!**
- Trim your toenails straight across, and smooth edges with a file or emery board.
- Use a pumice stone daily (on dry feet) to keep calluses under control. **Never try to cut calluses or corns!** See a doctor or foot care specialist.
- **Do not use chemical agents** such as medicated corn plasters. Seek advice from your healthcare provider.
- Apply a moisturizer over the tops and bottoms of your feet **but not between your toes.**
- Cover any blisters with a sterile dressing until healed. Watch closely. If slow to heal, call your doctor!
- Wear socks that have non-elastic tops and are free from bulky seams. Always check inside your socks for any foreign objects or rough surfaces before putting them on. Wearing socks inside out can prevent the seams from rubbing the skin.
- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes with cushioned soles. **Have your feet measured before you buy - remember you may not be able to "feel" if they fit.** Soft breathable materials such as lycra, soft leather, or suede, are best. Choose adjustable footwear with laces or velcro.
- Before you put on your shoes always check inside for any foreign bodies, rough seams, or ridges. Remember, you may no longer be able to feel these things!
- Avoid sitting close to fires and heaters - they can burn your skin without you noticing.
- Do not use electric heating pads, and always remove hot water bottles from the bed before getting in.

**If you notice any swelling, warmth, redness, or pain in your legs or feet, see your doctor right away!**