Connecticut Orthopaedics

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Sports Medicine/Foot & Ankle

Care of the Diabetic Foot
Instructions

1. Do not smoke.
2. Inspect the feet daily for blisters, cuts and scratches. The use of a mirror can aid in seeing the bottoms of the feet. Always check between the toes.
3. Wash feet daily. Dry carefully, especially between the toes.
4. Avoid extremes of temperature. Test water with hand or elbow before bathing.
5. If feet feel cold at night, wear socks. Do not apply hot water bottles or heating pads. Do not soak feet in hot water.
6. Do not walk on hot surfaces such as sandy beaches, or on the cement around swimming pools.
7. Do not walk barefooted.
8. Do not use chemical agents for the removal of corns and calluses. Do not use corn plasters. Do not use strong antiseptic solutions on your feet.
9. Do not use adhesive tape on your feet.
10. Inspect the inside of shoes daily for foreign objects, nail points, torn linings, and rough areas.
11. If your vision is impaired, have a family member inspect feet daily, trim nails and buff down calluses.
12. Do not soak feet.
13. For dry feet, use a very thin coat of lubricating oil such as baby oil. Apply this after bathing and drying the feet. Do not put the oil or cream between the toes. Consult our physician for detailed instructions.
14. Wear properly fitting stockings. Do not wear mended stockings. Avoid stockings with seams. Change stockings daily.
15. Do not wear garters.
16. Shoes should be comfortable at the time of purchase. Do not depend on them to stretch out. Shoes should be made of leather. Break shoes in gradually.
17. Do not wear shoes without stockings.
18. Do not wear sandals with thongs between the toes.
19. In winter, take special precautions. Wear wool socks and protective footgear, such as fleece lined boots.
20. Cut nails straight across.
21. Do not cut corns and calluses; follow special instructions from your physician.
22. Avoid crossing your legs; this can cause pressure on the nerves and the blood vessels.
23. See your physician regularly and be sure that your feet are examined at each visit. legs; this can cause pressure on the nerves and the blood vessels.
24. Notify your physician at once should you develop a blister or sore on your feet.
25. Be sure to inform your physician that you are a diabetic.

Adapted from Levin ME: The Diabetic Foot: Pathophysiology, Evaluation and Treatment" in The Diabetic Foot, 4th edition, Levin ME and O'Neal LW Editors, The CV Mosby Company, St. Louis, MO, 1988.

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