



**Wolverhampton
Diabetes Care**

The Foot Complications and Footwear

Foot problems can affect anyone who has diabetes especially if there is a lack of circulation, poor feeling in the feet or if the feet are misshapen. Any injury to the foot can break the skin, let infection in and lead to an ulcer. Poorly chosen shoes are a common cause of such injury, leading to these serious problems, even including amputation.

Footwear can damage feet?

Your choice of footwear is so important. Good foot care must include choosing the correct footwear. The right shoes and stockings/tights/socks will help to keep your feet healthy. Having diabetes should not, in itself, cause you difficulties in finding suitable shoes.

Shoes that do not fit well can cause corns, calluses, in growing toe-nails, blisters and ulcers. Remember, because there might be a problem with numb sensation in your feet, don't be fooled into thinking your shoes and socks are safe just because they are comfortable. Maybe you simply can't feel that they are tight. If you have neuropathy (poor feeling) or poor circulation in your feet, continued rubbing or pinching by unsuitable shoes can cause serious damage without causing you any pain.

How can I help myself?

To ensure the shoes you buy are suitable for you, you should have your feet measured for size and width when you buy a new pair of shoes. Buy shoes which are broad fitting, have a deep and rounded toe area, are flat or low heel, are fastened by lace or buckle to keep the heel in the back of the shoe – this prevents the foot from being able to slide forward and crush the toes. Always examine the inside of your shoes for sharp objects or stones before putting them on and replace damaged inner sole linings. Avoid socks, stockings or tights with wrinkles or prominent seams. Stockings or socks with over tight elastic tops should also be avoided as they may restrict the circulation. Never wear socks with darned areas or holes which can also cause rubbing and damage.

Seeking help and what care to expect

You should have full education about foot care. Your feet should be examined every year. If you have misshapen feet or poor circulation and lost feeling then you should have specialist care. All of this includes clear advice about footwear. If your feet are at high risk, you should be assessed formally for special footwear.

If you are unsure of which fit or style is suitable for you, ask your diabetes team for advice or ask to see a diabetes specialist chiropodist.

You must report urgently to your diabetes team if there are any foot problems.