

## Diabetic Foot Care

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**People with diabetes have an increased risk of developing foot problems. Dr Pradeep Gadge, a leading diabetologist, Gadge Diabetes Centre throws some light on foot injuries that can be prevented with Diabetic Shoes.**



High blood sugar contributes to poor blood circulation. It can also damage nerves in your feet, a condition called neuropathy. Neuropathy can cause you to lose feeling in your feet, which may make it difficult for you to realize if you cut yourself or injure your foot. If you leave a cut untreated, it can lead to an infection. Poor circulation can make it difficult to heal cuts and infections. Poorly controlled blood sugar can damage many parts of the body, including the nerves and vessels that go to the feet. Because of this, people with diabetes have an increased risk of developing foot problems.

While walking is a beneficial activity to our health, and very useful for controlling blood sugar levels, it might come with risks of injuries for people with Diabetes and Neuropathy. Fortunately, most of these foot injuries can be prevented by paying proper attention to foot care, and by wearing proper Diabetic footwear.

Diabetic shoes are specially designed shoes intended to offer protection for diabetic feet and reduce the risk of skin breakdown, primarily in cases of poor circulation, neuropathy and foot deformities. If your diabetes is under control and you don't have any real foot problems, a comfortable, well-fitting shoe may be all you need.

It's also important to find a shoe that fits well and matches the shape of your foot. You don't want your foot sliding around inside the shoe. This can cause blisters, sores, and calluses, which can be dangerous for a person with diabetes. Choosing a proper shoe can help to protect you against common injuries associated with your type of workout. Good shoes can lessen the impact of your step and cushion the foot from heavy landings. In addition, sport or exercise specific shoes can improve your performance, enabling, for example, quick direction changes.

Improper workout footwear can cause a number of injuries. Besides the more obvious injuries, including ankle strains and fractures, bunions and corns, some other lesser-known injuries are common. Metatarsalgia, a condition which presents as pain in the ball of the foot, can be worsened by poorly fitting footwear.

Finding a good shoe is important if you have diabetes. Below are some tips

- Look for a lightweight shoe that lets your feet move and breathe.

- Choose a flexible material, such as leather, canvas, or suede.
- Remember that a good diabetic shoe should have a shock-absorbing sole, which will help relieve pressure on the bottom of your foot.
- Pick shoes with laces that you can loosen or tighten. This makes it easier to accommodate any swelling or changes in your feet over time.
- Keep in mind that the shoe should also have a solid back to provide extra support.

People with diabetes should avoid wearing certain types of shoes:

- Avoid any shoe with a pointed toe because it will aggravate your toes and restrict circulation.
- Don't wear shoes without arch support, as they may lead to the breakdown of tissue in your foot.
- Be careful to avoid shoes that don't fit properly, as those could injure your feet.
- Wear high heels sparingly if at all. If you do wear high heels, round-toe styles with heels below 2 inches are best.
- Diabetic socks are socks aimed at people with diabetes. Quite often, diabetic socks are designed without seams in order to reduce the chance of blistering. They are designed to control moisture in order to reduce risk of fungal infection or with cushioning to prevent foot ulcers.

The socks for people with diabetes should have the following features:

- Non-elasticated cuffs
- No prominent seams
- Keep in warmth (in Winter season)
- Allow feet to breathe and sweat to dry out (in summer season)

It is typically recommended that individuals should put on their diabetic socks from the time they step out of bed in the morning until right before they go back to bed at night. The less time you are barefooted, the less likely you injure your feet by accidentally kicking things or stepping on items. Aside from lessening the friction on the foot from the floor surface, the socks can also maintain your feet at an optimal temperature for better blood circulation. If you exercise or play a sport, you should remove the socks, thoroughly clean your feet from sweat and moisture, and put on a new pair of clean socks afterwards. As a matter of fact, many diabetes individuals also choose to have socks for various tasks throughout the day such as, house socks, athletic socks and work socks.

To avoid serious foot problems that could result in losing a toe, foot or leg, follow these guidelines:

Check your feet and toes, inspecting the tops, sides, soles, heels, and the area in between the toes daily before going to bed.

- Wash your feet every day in warm water with mild soap. Hot water and harsh soaps can damage your skin. Check the water temperature with your fingers or elbow before putting your feet in.
- Pat your feet to dry them and make sure to dry well. Infections tend to develop in moist areas, so make sure you dry the area between your toes well.
- Avoid walking barefoot. Most people know to avoid hot pavement or sandy beaches, but even walking barefoot around the house can cause sores or injuries that can get infected.
- Protect your feet from heat and cold.
- Never attempt to remove corns, calluses, warts, or other foot lesions yourself. Don't use chemical wart removers, razor blades, corn plasters, or liquid corn or callus removers.
- See your doctor or podiatrist.
- Trim your toenails after washing your feet, when your nails are soft.
- Use a moisturizer daily to keep dry skin from itching or cracking. But don't moisturize between the toes that could encourage a fungal infection.

**- Dr. Pradeep Gadge, a leading diabetologist, Gadge Diabetes Centre**