**About diabetes**

Diabetes is for life. It can be diagnosed at any age.

Nerves and blood vessels supplying your feet can be damaged. This can affect:

* The feeling in your feet (neuropathy)
* Circulation supplying your feet (ischemia)

Changes to your feet can take a long time to show themselves and can go unnoticed. It is therefore very important that you **check your feet regularly**, and attend your annual diabetic foot check.

**You can reduce the risk of developing foot problems by having your feet checked annually by your practise nurse, diabetic nurse, GP or podiatrist, as well as controlling your diabetes, cholesterol, and blood pressure.**

**If you smoke, we encourage you to stop.** Smoking affects circulation which can lead to amputation.

Since your feet are in good health, you will not need regular podiatry treatment. If you are unable to cut your nails, you can be seen by the Foot Care Team for a small fee.

If you have any problems or concerns, do not hesitate in contacting us.

**Keeping your feet healthy**

Check your feet every day

* It is important that you check your feet every day for blisters, breaks in the skin, corns, callus, or signs of infection such as pain, swelling and redness.

Wash your feet everyday

* You should wash your feet everyday with warm water and a little soap. This will also help you check for any changes to your feet or your skin.
* Make sure you dry your feet well, especially in between the toes. If you find that they remain wet even after drying, apply a little surgical spirits. This will help dry them out.

Moisturise your feet everyday

* If like most people with diabetes, you suffer from dry skin, apply a little moisturiser avoiding the areas in between your toes.

Toenails

* Cut or file your nails regularly. Make sure you file any sharp edges, and do not cut down the side of the nail as this can cause in growing toe nails.

Socks, stockings and tights

* It is best to change your socks, stockings or tights on a daily bases to ensure good foot health. They should not be too tight, or have bulky seams.

Avoid walking barefoot

* You are more likely to injure yourself by stubbing your toes or standing on sharp objects if you do not wear slippers or shoes.

Check your shoes

* Check the inside of your shoes with your hand for anything that could have fallen inside that may cause rubbing or damage to your skin.

Badly-fitting shoes

* Check the inside of your shoes before purchasing them for any seams that may rub against your skin. Poorly fitting shoes that are either too tight or not supportive enough are a common cause of foot problems.

Minor cuts and blisters

* If you find that you have any breaks in your skin such as a cut or blister, cover it over with a plaster. If it does not heal or shows signs of infection, contact your GP or podiatry team.

Corns and callus

* Do not use over the counter corn treatment as this can cause damage to the skin, and lead to other complications. Do not try and remove the corn or callus yourself with any blades, instead make an appointment with your podiatry team for it to be removed.

**If you are concerned about your feet, contact your GP or podiatry team.**

**Podiatry Services**

Carfax Street Health Centre, Carfax Street, Swindon, SN1 1ED

Podiatry reception: 01793 463810

Main reception: 01793 486991

**Osprey Outpatients Department**

Great Western Hospital, NHS Foundation Trust, Marlborough Road, SN3 6BB

**Foot Care Services**

Enterprise Works, Gypsy Lane

Tel: 01793 46 66 66

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email** **patient.information@gwh.nhs.uk**

**Document Control**

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