

Footwear for people with Diabetes

Information for patients

It is really important that people with diabetes AVOID injuring their feet. Wearing shoes can protect the feet, but ill-fitting or unsuitable shoes can create problems. If a person has diabetes, a neglected foot injury is more likely to develop into a serious foot problem than in a person without diabetes. Injuries that cause a break in the skin, even a tiny puncture wound, can cause infections if 'germs' get in.

General advice:

- Walking with bare feet increases the risk of injury so should be avoided.
- Try to wear a shoe or thick soled slipper indoors to protect your feet.
- Before putting footwear on, check inside for any sharp edges or objects, or holes in the sole.
- Pressure from poorly fitting shoes can cause corns, calluses, nail problems and foot ulcers. Even tightly fitting socks and stockings can cramp the toes and may cause problems as toes rub together.
- Try to avoid foot pressures as much as possible.

Buy at least one pair of comfortable, well-fitting shoes. If you have difficulties finding these ask your GP for advice. You may be referred to an Orthotist for specially made shoes.

Tell your Doctor or Nurse if you notice any of the following:

- Any colour change in leg or foot;
- Any fluid or discharge from the skin, or nail;
- Your foot becomes swollen/painful/uncomfortable or is throbbing;
- Any irritation e.g. severe itching or burning;
- The foot smells strange/different;
- You feel unwell – if you develop a fever, 'flu-like symptoms' or your diabetes control becomes poor.

Remember to take care of your feet; examine them daily and ask for help when a problem develops. This may help to prevent major problems.

Buying shoes

- Good shoe shops will measure adult's feet. Feet do change in shape and size over time. Have your feet measured whilst you are standing up and in the afternoon, as feet swell a little during the day.
- Width is just as important a length – do not just buy the next size up.
- Shoes should NEVER need to be 'broken in'.
- When buying new shoes, wear them around the house for about half an hour, then check there are no signs of redness, swelling or irritation on your feet.
- Do not buy new shoes for holidays, wear shoes that you know fit well and have not caused any foot problems.

Everyday shoes - for everyday wear

- Keep at least one pair of comfortable, well-fitting shoes - ideally shoes should be made of soft leather and have a lace/buckle/velcro fastener. They should have enough room at the toe box area to allow the toes to be wriggled around and have a foot shaped, cushioning rubber sole, and a wide low heel.
- Wear comfortable shoes when you are on your feet a lot – walking, at work, shopping, housework etc. Shoes will support your feet and help to avoid foot strain.
- Avoid wearing slippers while you are on your feet a lot as they offer little support.
- Wear slippers just for short periods when you are not on your feet a lot. Slippers will help to keep feet warm and offer a little protection.
- Before putting shoes or slippers on feel or look inside them to make sure there are no sharp edges, rough seams or foreign objects.
- If shoes get wet, change them as soon as possible to avoid the feet getting cold or the skin being chaffed.



Podiatry Services

City of Coventry Health Centre
2 Stoney Stanton Road
Coventry
CV1 4FS
Telephone: 024 7696 1335

If you require this document in a different format or language, please contact the Trust's Equality and Diversity Department on 024 7653 6802