TODAY'S PODIATRIST TALKS ABOUT

DIABETES

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Startling Statistics

Healthy feet are essential for overall good health. For people with diabetes, taking care of their feet is especially vital. More than 60 percent of all non-traumatic lower-limb amputations worldwide are related to complications from the disease, according to the American Diabetes Association. These amputations are preventable with careful monitoring and regular foot screenings performed by a podiatrist.

Diabetes and Your Feet

While open sores on the foot—called ulcers—are the most common diabetes-related foot problem, serious conditions such as neuropathy, skin changes, calluses, poor circulation, and infection are also prevalent. The nerve damage that diabetes causes may mean a person with an ulcer or injury may be unaware of it until it becomes infected. Infection can lead to partial or full amputation of the foot or lower leg.

Diabetes Warning Signs:

- Skin color changes
- Swelling of the foot or ankle
- Numbness or tingling in the feet or toes
- Open sores on the feet that are slow to heal
- Ingrown and fungal toenails
- Bleeding corns and calluses
- Dry cracks in the skin/heel

CONT. ON OTHER SIDE

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Avoid Complications

Inspect feet daily.
Check your feet and toes every day for cuts, bruises, sores, or changes to the toenails, such as thickening or discoloration.

Wear thick, soft socks.
Avoid socks with seams, which could rub and cause blisters or other skin injuries.

Exercise.
Walking can help control blood sugar, keep weight down, and improve circulation. Be sure to wear appropriate athletic shoes when exercising.

Have new shoes properly measured and fitted.
Foot size and shape may change over time. Shoes that fit properly are important to those with diabetes.

Don't go barefoot.
Don't go without shoes, even in your own home. The risk of cuts and infection is too great for those with diabetes.

See a podiatrist.
Make at least two appointments a year with an APMA member podiatrist, the foot and ankle expert, to have your feet examined. This is a critical step in avoiding diabetic foot complications and amputation.

Fast Fact:

More than 65,000 lower limbs are amputated annually due to complications from diabetes. Including a podiatrist in your diabetes care can reduce the risk of lower limb amputation up to 85 percent.

The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) is the nation's leading professional organization for today's podiatrists. Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) are qualified by their education, training, and experience to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and structures of the leg. APMA has 53 state component locations across the United States and its territories, with a membership of more than 12,500 podiatrists. All practicing APMA members are licensed by the state in which they practice podiatric medicine. **For more information, visit www.apma.org.**

MEMBER
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