

## What is a Diabetic Ulcer?

People who suffer from diabetes mellitus, whether its onset is during childhood or adulthood, often suffer from numerous other diseases directly related to diabetes. Some of these are venous or arterial insufficiency, neuropathy (loss of sensation to feet), Charcot foot (degeneration of the joints and bones in the foot) loss of moisture, or dry skin, infection, osteomyelitis, or gangrene. Diabetic Ulcers often are a by-product of one of these other complications. Most people's skin is warm to touch and has a palpable pulse but the wound is resistant to healing. This is frequently caused by a disruption of blood flow, infection or both. Diabetic Ulcers can appear anywhere on the body but are commonly found on the toes, feet, heels and ankles. Blood sugar control is a key factor in healing a diabetic ulcer.



## What to look for & What to do

### Signs and Symptoms of Diabetic Ulcer formation

Most diabetic ulcers form from an injury or pressure. The pressure can be from external causes such as ill fitting shoes, or from internal causes such as bony deformity in the foot. What sets a diabetic ulcer apart from other ulcers is its healing capabilities, or lack thereof. Knowing this, it is imperative that diabetic patients take special precautions to prevent injury and ulcer formation.

### Hygiene and Inspection

Inspect your feet daily, use a mirror to see the bottom of your feet and between toes

Wash your feet daily and dry thoroughly, especially between the toes

Apply a moisturizer daily or more often if feet are dry and cracked. Avoid putting lotion between toes as this area becomes too moist

Avoid hot water bottles or heating pads to feet, always check water temperature with elbow to prevent burning yourself

NEVER trim your own calluses or corns, do not use over the counter corn, callus or wart removers.



## General Foot Care

Trim toenails straight across and never shorter than the length of your toe

Never walk on hot pavement or sand

Protect feet with sunscreen

NEVER go barefoot, inside or outside

### Socks and Shoes

Always wear socks with your shoes

Avoid synthetic materials, 100% cotton will allow feet to "breathe" and wick moisture

Do not darn your socks, replace them.

Buy shoes made of soft leather or athletic type material that will mold to your foot.

Buy shoes late in the day for the best fit as most people's feet swell as the day goes on

Buy shoes with a wide toe box so your toes are not cramped in your shoes

Never wear new shoes for more than 2 hours at a time until they are "broke in"

Inspect your shoes before putting them on to verify there are no foreign objects

Inspect your feet after removing your shoes for any reddened areas or blisters

Custom molded shoes may be necessary

When do I need to have someone look at my wounds?

If you are suffering from a diabetic ulcer, you may benefit from the advice of a professional trained in the care of these types of ulcers.

If you have a wound that you do not know how you got.



If you notice a sore area with increased warmth and redness.

You notice a blister formation or purplish discoloration

If your wound does not show significant signs of healing or gets worse after the pressure is relieved.

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