

Don't Let Diabetes Get a Foothold on You



Latin Americans and African-Americans are at a greater risk for developing diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

In fact, Latin Americans are nearly twice as likely to get diabetes and five times less likely to visit a doctor for medical problems than Caucasians.

The disease can impact many parts of the body including nerve and vascular damage, which can result in a loss of sensation in the feet. Poor circulation can lead to hard to heal foot ulcers. If not treated in time, the American Podiatric Medical Association warns, these complication can result in lower-limb amputations for people with diabetes.

A podiatrist plays an important role in the diabetes management team. Regular visits to an APMA member podiatrist, as part of a comprehensive foot care plan, can help reduce the rate of lower-limb amputations by 45 percent to 85 percent.

Follow these simple at-home tips to make sure your feet are as healthy as possible:

- **Check your feet every day**

Especially if you have a loss of sensation, visually inspecting your feet daily will help you notice any cuts, sores, blisters or changes in the skin or toenails. You can use a hand mirror to help you check the bottoms of your feet. If you notice a change in your feet, see your podiatrist immediately.

- **Clean your feet daily**

Washing your feet will help avoid the buildup of bacteria. Be sure to wash in warm water, rather than hot. Completely dry your feet after washing and pay special attention to drying between the toes.

- **Keep skin healthy**

By lightly applying lotion or moisturizer to your feet, you can help prevent against dry, flaky or cracked skin. Use lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet, but never between the toes. Excess moisture between the toes can lead to infection.

- **Always wear shoes and socks**

Soft, lightly padded socks will help you avoid blisters and sores. Socks with no seams are best. Also, examine inside your shoes to be sure there is nothing harmful that will injure your feet.

- **Choose shoes that fit well and protect your feet**

One of the best ways to avoid injuries to your feet is to wear sturdy and supportive shoes at all times. For more information, visit www.apma.org.

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