Proper Footcare and Diabetes

Canadian Certified Pedorthists – C. Ped (C) urge Canadians living with diabetes to make footcare a daily priority. An estimated 2.3 million Canadians currently live with diabetes and 14 – 24 per cent of those are at risk of developing a foot ulcer that will result in the amputation of a foot or leg.

The majority of foot problems diagnosed in people with diabetes could have been avoided through daily footcare and proper shoe selection. Many people with diabetes have reduced circulation or sensation in their feet (called neuropathy), and are not able to feel if something in their shoe or the shoe itself is irritating their foot. To avoid the development of wounds or ulcers, it is vital people living with diabetes visually examine their feet daily and have footwear professionally reviewed or fit.

Diabetes Canada recommends that all people with diabetes should be instructed on proper footcare and have a foot examination at least once a year to avoid the risk of amputation. Foot examinations should include an assessment of any structural abnormalities such as feet that lean excessively to one side, causing friction between the foot and the shoe, signs of neuropathy and vascular disease, and evidence of any ulcerations and/or infections. Along with regular foot examinations, a daily footcare routine and proper shoe selection are equally vital to help maintain the health of the feet.

Footcare: Pedorthic Pointers for Patients

- Inspect your feet daily. Be alert for redness, swelling, broken skin, sores or bleeding. See your Physician immediately if any of these problems arise.
- Protect your feet from injury, wear your shoes indoors and outdoors.
- Wash your feet with soap and warm water every day, but do not soak them.
- Avoid heat pads or hot water bottles. With a lack of sensation, it is easy to burn your feet.
- Avoid socks with heavy seams as they can irritate the skin leading to breakdown or ulceration.
- Avoid tight constrictive socks and clothing that can limit blood flow.

Shoe Selection: Pedorthic Pointers for Patients

- Have your shoes professionally fit or reviewed by a trained specialist such as Canadian Certified Pedorthist C. Ped (C)
- Select footwear with: soft uppers with minimal seams; deep, wide toe boxes; firm but cushioned soles; removable insoles; strong heel counters; and rockered soles
- Lace up shoes offer a versatile fit and are recommended. However, if tying laces is difficult select footwear with Velcro closures vs a slip-on shoe.
- When purchasing shoes, remove the insole and stand on it. If your foot overlaps any area, the shoe is too narrow or too short.
- Make sure there is a full finger width between the end of your longest toe and the end of your shoe.
- Avoid seams over the toe area as they resist stretching and can rub against your skin causing it to break down or ulcerate.
- If you have a problem with lower limb swelling, ask your Physician about graduated compression stockings to help control swelling and improve your shoe fit.

If you are experiencing foot pain, or to have a diabetes related foot assessment talk to your Physician or book an appointment with a Canadian Certified Pedorthist.

Submitted by Okaped Inc.
Five clinics in the Okanagan, three of which are in Kelowna and West Kelowna
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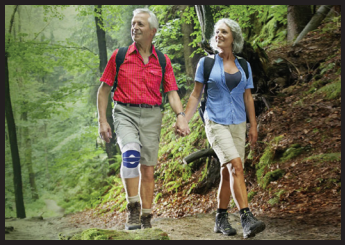

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