

looking after yourself

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For more information on diabetes visit our website
where Novo Nordisk booklets are available
in a downloadable format:

www.changingdiabetes.co.uk

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Further information is available from:
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changing diabetes



Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for people with diabetes and is designed to help you 'look after yourself' to allow you to lead an enjoyable lifestyle.

It gives dietary advice and explains how to look after your feet to avoid any unnecessary complications.

If you need more information, or have any worries about your diabetes or health, your Doctor or Diabetes Specialist Nurse will be happy to help.

Remember – diabetes should not stop you enjoying life

Contents

looking after your feet	Page 1
What about diet?	Page 3
What about exercise	Page 4

Looking after your feet...

Research has shown that people with diabetes who take good care of their feet and protect them from injury can significantly reduce the risk of developing foot ulcers.

If you do develop foot ulcers it is good to know that they often respond well to treatment. DO remember however that if left untreated, even the smallest foot ulcers can develop into serious problems. The following information will help you to look after your feet:

1. Wash your feet daily.

Test the water temperature with an elbow to avoid scalding accidents.

2. Dry – especially between toes.

Cut and file toenails straight across.
Contact a chiropodist if you have any problems.



3. Apply moisturiser (or hand cream) to keep your skin supple and prevent cracking.



4. It is ESSENTIAL to examine your feet daily for cuts or anything unusual.



5. Breaks in the skin should be covered with a dry, sterile dressing. Do NOT burst blisters but seek help from your GP or chiropodist.



6. NEVER use sharp instruments on your feet.

Do NOT use corn plasters etc. as they contain ACIDS.

If any problems occur seek advice from your GP, diabetic clinic or chiropodist.

7. AVOID direct heat and hot water bottles – loss of pain and temperature sensitivity make these dangerous.

8. Remember DIABETES can affect the rate of healing and breaks in the skin may take a little longer to heal. Older people are most at risk.

9. Ensure shoes fit well – have your feet measured.

Remember shoes must fit feet – NOT VICE VERSA.

Never go barefoot.



10. Check inside shoes for sharp objects, etc. Also check inside socks.



11. Keep in touch with a chiropodist who is there to advise on foot care.

What about diet?

You can help to keep your blood glucose levels within recommended limits by combining your diabetes treatment with a healthy diet, regular physical activity and weight control.

Having diabetes doesn't mean that you have to cut out the foods you like or buy special "diabetic" foods, however it does mean that you should aim to eat a balanced diet which can help control both your weight and your blood glucose as well as keeping blood pressure and cholesterol levels down.

Eat healthy food

- Foods that are good for people with diabetes are good for everyone



Remember:

- ✓ Avoid fatty foods
- ✓ Eat mostly vegetables, fruit, cereals, rice and pasta
- ✓ Eat only small amounts of refined sugar e.g. jam and sweets
- ✓ Keep to sensible amounts of alcohol

What else should I do?

- ✓ Eat at regular intervals – don't skip meals
- ✓ Don't over eat – watch your weight
- ✓ If you smoke – **STOP**



What about exercise?

Physical activity is an important part of managing your diabetes as it helps to regulate your blood glucose levels, helps insulin to work more effectively and helps to reduce the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and strokes. Therefore the following should be considered:

Why?

- ✓ Improves your blood glucose control
- ✓ Helps you lose weight
- ✓ Makes you feel better

What sort of exercise?

- ✓ Any kind of movement that you enjoy, e.g. swimming, walking, dancing, tennis, football, even housework!
- ✓ If you are new to insulin, start your exercise slowly with advice from your Doctor or Diabetes Specialist Nurse

How often should I exercise?

- ✓ Aim for 20-30 minutes at least three times a week

What else should I do?

- ✓ Wear well-fitted, cushioned shoes or trainers
- ✓ Carry glucose tablets in case of 'hypos'
- ✓ Check your blood glucose level is normal before and after exercise

Most of all – have fun

