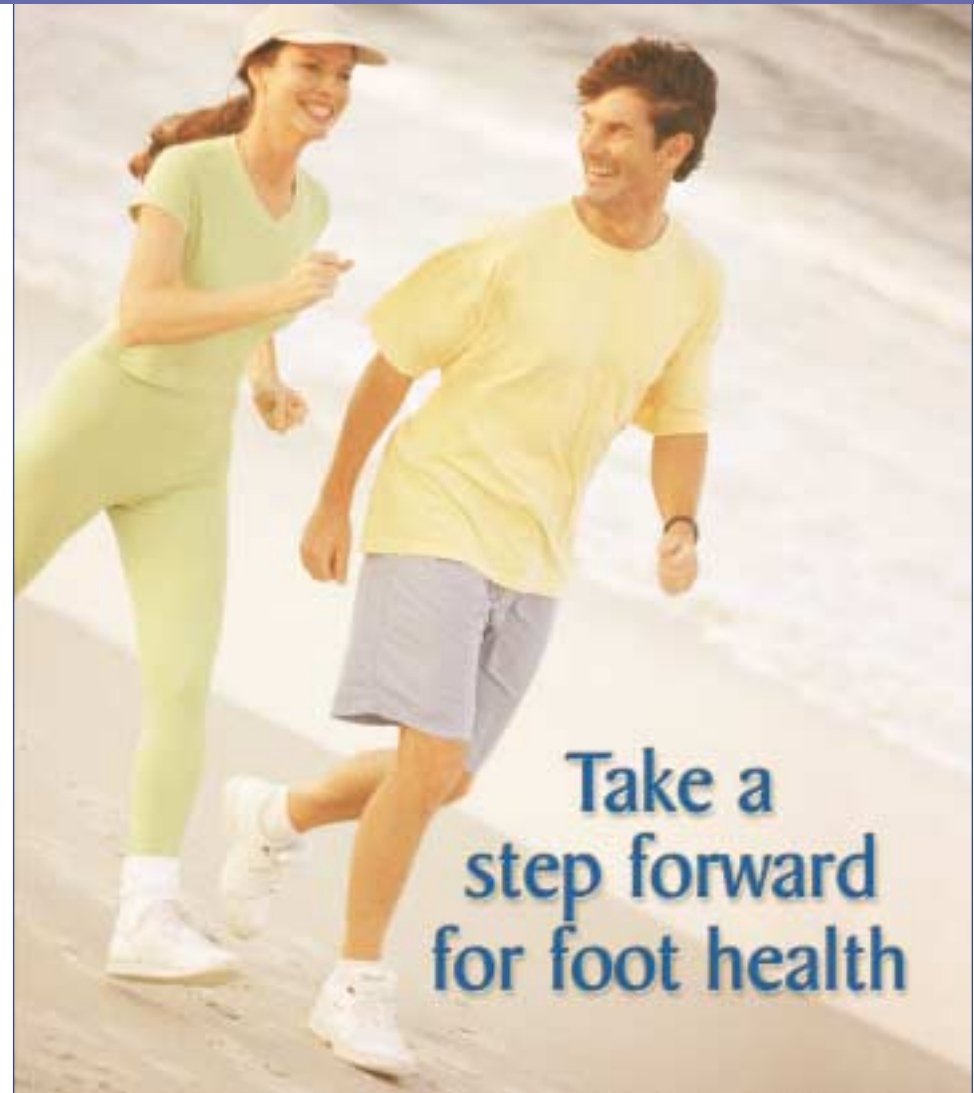


**Q.** What can I do to take good care of my feet?

**A.** There are many things you can do to help ensure good foot health:

- Do not smoke
- Wear comfortable shoes and soft clean socks
- Do not walk barefoot
- Examine your feet daily for any redness, discoloration, ingrown toenails, cuts, calluses, etc.
- Wash your feet daily in warm water
- Exercise regularly
- Make sure your physician or podiatrist examines your feet regularly
- Contact your provider right away if you detect a problem



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# Make the move to good foot care



We believe that managing your diabetes requires teamwork. That's why we want you to know the facts about foot care, from self-examinations to podiatric screenings. Here are some answers to questions commonly asked by patients concerning diabetes and their feet.

## Q. Why are people with diabetes at risk for foot problems?

### A. There are two reasons why serious foot problems can develop.

- 1) Diabetes often causes neuropathy (nerve damage) in your feet. Its symptoms include pain, tingling, and numbness. Numbness, or loss of feeling, is the most serious problem because it prevents your brain from acknowledging a painful condition. Shoes that are causing corns, water that is too hot to bathe or soak in, or the pain of a worsening infection could go unfelt, undetected, and untreated.
- 2) Diabetes can also cause poor circulation. This is a serious problem. When blood flow in your feet is weak, tissues do not receive necessary nutrients such as oxygen. Without this nourishment, your feet cannot fight infections effectively.

## Q. How do I know if I'm likely to develop foot problems?

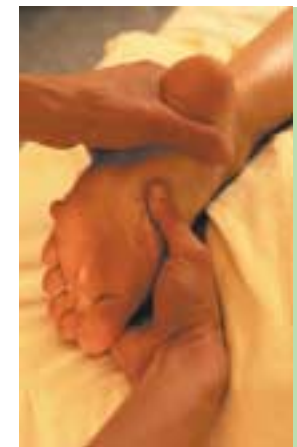
### A. Several factors increase your likelihood of developing foot problems. For instance, bunions, corns, high arches, or flat feet sometimes put too much pressure on certain parts of the foot and can lead to foot ulcers that can become infected. Your physician or podiatrist can help assess your feet and look for conditions that may cause problems.

Smoking is a high risk habit which could lead to foot problems in diabetic patients because it decreases blood flow to your feet. High blood cholesterol and high blood sugar levels also increase the risk of circulatory problems in diabetic patients.

## Q. Are there any warning signs of serious foot problems?

### A. Early detection and yearly foot screenings are essential to preventing serious problems. To help detect and prevent these problems, the American Diabetes Association stresses the importance of proper foot care that includes daily checks for the following warning signs:

- Color changes of the skin
- Warmer than normal skin temperature
- Swelling of the foot or ankle
- Pain in the legs
- Open sores that are slow to heal
- Ingrown toenails
- Fungal infections
- Bleeding corns and calluses
- Dry, cracked skin—especially around the heel



Contact your provider immediately if you experience any of the above.