

Steps for Preventing Diabetes Foot Problems

1. Perform a Comprehensive Foot Exam Annually.

- Examine skin, hair, toenails, musculoskeletal structure, and evaluate vascular status, and protective sensation.
- Inspect footwear for proper fit, appropriate materials, foreign objects, torn linings, and proper cushioning.

2. Categorize Your Findings.

| LOW RISK All of the following: | HIGH RISK One or more of the following: |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intact protective sensation• Pedal pulses present• No foot deformity• No current or prior foot ulcer• No amputation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of protective sensation• Absent pedal pulses• Foot deformity• History of foot ulcer• Prior amputation |

3. Document Your Findings in the Medical Record.

4. Counsel Your Patients and/or Refer to a Diabetes Educator.

- Talk with your patients about their risk category.
- Demonstrate self-care techniques.
- Prescribe appropriate footwear.
- Give positive feedback for proper foot care.
- Give patients the self-care tip sheet in this kit.
- Counsel about smoking cessation if needed.
- Reinforce the importance of blood glucose control to reduce the risk for foot problems and other complications.

5. Follow Up with Low Risk Patients.

- Visually inspect feet at subsequent visits as warranted.
- Inspect footwear at every visit as warranted.

6. Follow Up with High Risk Patients.

- Place a "high risk feet" sticker on medical record.
- Visually inspect feet at every visit.
- Inspect footwear at every visit.
- Prescribe special inserts and shoes as needed.
- Refer to specialists for a risk factor you cannot rectify.
- Ensure that the elderly and blind have help for daily foot care.

Annual Comprehensive Diabetes Foot Exam

A physician or other trained health care provider should complete this exam and document findings in the medical record. Conducting an annual comprehensive diabetes foot exam will enable you to:

1. Note the presence of any diabetes complications (eye, kidney, nerve, vascular).
2. Note history or presence of foot ulcer.
3. Examine the ankles and feet, including between the toes. Visually inspect hair, skin, and nails and note abnormalities on the foot diagram.
4. Use this ruler to measure calluses, lesions, and ulcers.
5. Note deformities and atrophy of plantar fat pad.
6. Check pedal pulses.
7. Perform a sensory exam at five sites with a 5.07 (10-gram) Semmes-Weinstein monofilament and note results.
8. Determine the patient's risk status.
9. Check the patient's footwear.
10. Determine the patient's education needs.
11. Complete a management plan for education, diagnostic studies, footwear recommendations, referrals, and follow-up visits.

To order monofilaments for your practice, call HRSA/BPHC at 1-888-275-4772.