



Your Guide to Wound Care

DIABETIC FOOT ULCERS

You have a diabetic foot ulcer, a type of wound caused in people with diabetes for a number of reasons.

The loss of sensation in your feet caused by diabetes can result in unnoticed pressure or injury. Incorrect footwear can increase the pressure on your feet, which you cannot feel. Normal injuries like nicks, cuts, bruises or blisters may go unnoticed and progress into ulcers. Then, the lack of blood flow caused by the diabetes decreases the body's ability to heal. Smoking increases this risk as it diminishes blood flow to the extremities.

Diabetic foot ulcers are often painless, but may take weeks or even several months to heal, and are the most common reason for hospital stays for people with diabetes. Left untreated, they are a common cause for surgical amputations.

MANAGING YOUR DIABETIC FOOT ULCER

Knowing what caused your arterial ulcer and your risk factors will help you manage your wound and prevent future arterial ulcers from forming. In order to be YOUR healthiest, you should:



1. **Monitor and control your sugars.** Your nurse can help you learn to do this.
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2. **Wear properly fitting shoes and socks.** Your nurse may refer you to a chiropodist for special footwear. This will ensure your feet are not under pressure.
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3. **Try not to go barefoot.** Since diabetics often can't feel their feet, going barefoot is dangerous. Always wear your shoes or slippers.
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4. **Eat a balanced diet,** high in protein, which keeps your skin strong and helps wounds to heal. Your NE LHIN team may recommend a special diet.
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5. **If you smoke, QUIT!** It's bad for blood flow, your skin, and your body. Your team will talk to you about options that will help you kick the habit. It's truly one of the best things you can do for your body at any age.
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