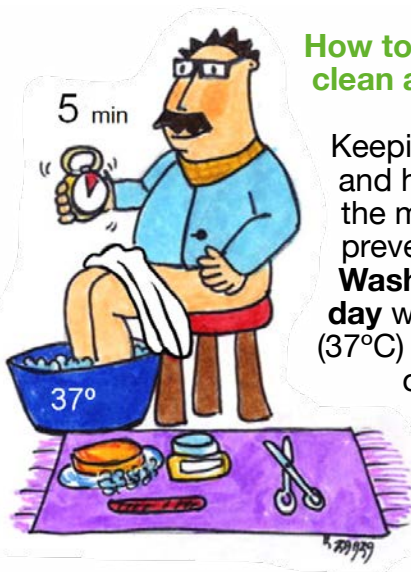


Diabetes mellitus

How to take care of your feet

It is very important for people with diabetes to take care of their feet so as to avoid complications. Diabetic patients are more likely to suffer from impaired circulation and sense of touch, they feel the cold, heat, pain and pressure less, and they may even have an open skin wound and not notice it.



How to keep your feet clean and healthy

Keeping your feet clean and healthy is one of the most important preventive activities. **Wash your feet every day** with warm water (37°C) and mild soap, but only for less than 5 minutes to avoid softening the skin.

Dry them with a soft towel, without rubbing hard

and dry carefully between the toes. A light-coloured towel will show up any stains from a cut or wound that you haven't noticed.

At the same time check your feet for skin damage. Examine your feet thoroughly every day, especially between the toes, in good light, using a mirror or magnifying glass if necessary.

Then apply moisturising cream to the heels and soles of your feet, but **never between your toes**. Do not use talcum powder as it dries the skin out too much.

How to trim your toenails

You should cut your nails straight across, leaving 1 or 2 mm between the nail and the tip of your toes.

You should use rounded scissors and a cardboard nail file to avoid cutting yourself. Ask a family member or a health professional to help you if your mobility or sight is impaired.



What to wear on your feet

Wear cotton, woollen or yarn **socks** that aren't tight. Light colours will help you detect any cuts or wounds.

Avoid getting **cold** and sources of **direct heat** (stoves, hot water bottles, hair driers...), which may burn you.

Never go barefoot. When you go to the beach or swimming pool wear rubber shoes to avoid hurting your feet. Don't wear tight-fitting footwear that can be painful. **Buy your shoes at the end of the day**, when your feet tend to be largest. Break in your new shoes slowly to avoid getting blisters or wounds from rubbing.



Your footwear should be made of soft, breathable material like leather, with laces or Velcro, but without inner seams, and it shouldn't be tight. Avoid sandals and open shoes.

Change your shoes often to avoid putting pressure on the same points.

Check inside your shoes before putting them on to make sure there are no stones, sand or anything else that could hurt your feet.

Always talk to your doctor, nurse or chiropodist if you have any queries or difficulties.