

December 2019

Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living



Taking the Right Step with Healthy Feet

Your feet take you many places and in return, require a lot of care. It is important to pay attention to your feet. Many chronic diseases (especially diabetes) can effect your feet. Reduced blood flow can lead to reduced circulation and nerve loss. This can cause sores and infections to develop without feeling pain or discomfort.

Some signs that you are having feet problems are: pains or cramps in legs; tingling or burning; change in shape of feet; skin changes; color changes; sores on the feet.. Please contact your doctor immediately if you are experiencing one or more of these.

Foot injuries can be prevented with proper care. It is important to follow a healthy lifestyle and manage chronic diseases to avoid complications. Proper care should become part of your daily routine. Your daily routine should include:

1. Following a well-balanced diet that meets your needs to maintain proper blood sugars. Incorporating fruits and vegetables (prepared in a healthy manner) provides many great health benefits. A registered dietitian and your primary care physician can help to develop an appropriate meal plan.
2. Washing your feet using warm water. Avoid using hot water as it can burn your feet, causing injuries. Use your hands to test the water to ensure proper temperature. Avoid soaking your feet for long periods of time.

3. Check your feet. Use a mirror if you have difficulty seeing the bottom and outer side of the foot. Place a mirror on the floor next to a chair you plan to use to check your feet. You may also find an inexpensive mirror on an expandable handle that can also be helpful. Look for unusual spots, missing skin, blisters, and new calluses.
4. Make sure your skin is soft and smooth. Use a small amount of unscented lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet but avoid putting it in between your toes.
5. Always wear shoes, even inside the house. It is important to make sure your shoes fit you correctly and do not rub. When you purchase a new pair of shoes, break them in for short periods of time rather than whole days. This will help avoid rubbing.



Have your feet checked at each of your doctor's appointments. Your doctor may not request to see your feet; however, be proactive and request it. If you are not able, you may also ask your doctor to trim your toenails to ensure they are done without damage and kept at appropriate length.

It is also important to see a podiatrist at least annually. Appointments may be more frequent if areas of concern arise.

Your overall health also plays a part in the health of your feet. It is important to continue to take medications as prescribed. Keep a record of your blood pressures and blood sugars to ensure they are at optimal levels. Take this record to your doctor's appointment.

Being physically active is important for your health for many reasons. Physical activity can help manage chronic diseases, give you energy, bring positive attitude, and promote healthy rest. Physical activity does not have to be over the top. Physical activity should be about 30 minutes every day; however, it does not have to be all at one time. It can be 10 minutes after each meal. If you are not able to walk, talk with your healthcare provider for other physical activity ideas.

If you smoke, your doctor may talk with you about quitting. Smoking can cause poor blood flow to your legs and feet which can lead to additional damage to the legs and feet. Talk with your doctor about ways to quit smoking. Your doctor can provide different programs and alternatives to help reach your goal to quit smoking.

Important Days in December:

- December 1st: World AIDS Day
- December 7th: Pearl Harbor Day
- December 22nd: Hanukkah begins
- December 24th: Christmas Eve
- December 25th: Christmas Day
- December 30th: Hanukkah Ends
- December 31st: New Year's Eve

References:

https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=181FEE98B9F200E0B904D2D0810FD34505E253DC&thid=OIP.DFHDeHJ_nMIP_nw8QC_yvwHaH8&mediaurl=http%3A%2F%2Fcrosswindconcepts.com%2FResources%2FDiabetic-foot-mirror-image.png&exph=309&expw=288&q=Diabetic+Foot+Care+Mirror&selectedindex=0&ajaxhist=0&vt=0&eim=1.2.6

[Cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep/pdfs/toolkits/working-together/151-health-feet-matter.pdf](http://www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/december.htm)

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