

Foot Care in Diabetics

Images of the foot conditions can be found at www.whelehans.ie (ailments section) or you can ask a staff member in store for a copy of these images. Diabetics have more foot problems than the general population due to their condition. Unfortunately, diabetics are at increased risk of serious foot problems including gangrene which can lead to amputation. However, these problems are preventable with proper foot care.

What to do if you have a foot problem?

If you have or think you may have a foot problem that requires professional assessment, you can simply call into Whelehans to have it assessed by our pharmacist for free and in private. Our pharmacist can check your feet for free in our newly built and private consultation room in the store. This will only take a couple of minutes. You can call in any time without having to make an appointment. Our pharmacist will advise you on how to prevent and treat the problem and what (if any) over the counter products will clear it up. If you need the services of a chiropodist, Whelehans now has a chiropodist visit the pharmacy every Thursday from 10am to 1pm. You can make an appointment in store or by phoning us at 04493 34591.

Foot problems in Diabetics

Foot care is very important for diabetics, but especially if there is a loss of feeling in the feet, changes in the shape of feet and foot ulcers or sores that do not heal. Nerve damage can cause loss of feeling in feet. A diabetic may not feel a pebble inside their sock that is causing a sore, or a blister caused by poorly fitting shoes. Foot injuries like these can cause ulcers which may lead to amputation. Keeping blood sugar under control and taking care of your feet every day can help avoid serious foot problems.

CHECK FEET EVERYDAY

Diabetics may have serious foot problems, but feel no pain. Look for cuts, sores, red spots, swelling or infected toenails. Find a time (evening is best) to check feet each day. If you have trouble bending over to see your feet, use a mirror to help.

WASH FEET DAILY

Wash feet in warm, not hot, water. However, do not soak feet, as this will cause the skin to get dry. Before bathing or showering, test the water to make sure it is not too hot. Use a thermometer (32 to 35°C is safe) or your elbow. Dry feet well, taking care to dry between your toes.



KEEP FEET MOISTURISED

Rub a thin coat of skin lotion, cream, or petroleum jelly on the tops and bottoms of the feet. Do not put lotion or cream between toes, because this might cause an infection. In Whelehans, I often recommend Calmurid[®] cream as it contains urea and lactic acid which means it is an excellent deep moisturising cream. Whelehans are introducing our own deep moisturising foot cream which is based on urea to prevent and treat dry, rough and cracked skin on the feet.

DON'T OVERDO IT

If using a pumice stone to smooth corns and calluses after bathing or showering, rub gently, in one direction only, to avoid tearing the skin. Do not cut corns and calluses. Diabetics should not use razor blades, corn plasters or liquid corn and callus removers as they can damage skin.

KEEP TOENAILS TRIM

Cut toenails each week or when needed. Wash and dry your feet first. Trim toenails straight across and smooth them with an emery board or nail file. Don't cut into the corners of the toenail as this can cause in-growing toenails. If your eyesight is poor, if your toenails are thick or yellowed, or if your nails curve and grow into the skin, have a chiropodist trim them.

WEAR SHOES AND SOCKS

Wear shoes and socks at all times. Do not walk barefoot - not even indoors - because it is easy to step on something and hurt your feet. Always wear socks, stockings or nylons with your shoes to help avoid blisters and sores. Socks that have no seams are best. Specially designed socks for people with diabetes are ideal. Whelehans can order special diabetic socks for you. Check inside your shoes for objects and creased lining before you put them on.

AVOID HOT AND COLD

Always wear shoes at the beach or on hot ground and put sunscreen on the top of feet to prevent sunburn. Keep feet away from radiators and open fires and don't put hot water bottles or heating pads on feet. Check your feet often in cold weather to avoid frostbite.

KEEP THE BLOOD FLOWING

Put feet up when you are sitting. Wiggle your toes for five minutes, twice or three times a day. Move ankles up and down and in and out to improve blood flow. Do not cross your legs for long. Don't wear tight socks, elastic or rubber bands, or anything restrictive around your legs. Don't smoke as smoking reduces blood flow to your feet.

By Eamonn Brady MPSI

Chiropodist

A chiropodist assesses diagnoses and treats diseases and abnormalities of the feet and lower limbs. A chiropodist can significantly improve a person's quality of life by alleviating painful symptoms and promoting and maintaining mobility. Whelehan's pharmacy now has a chiropodist the store every Thursday morning. The consultation with our chiropodist takes place in a private consultation room. You can make an appointment in store or by phoning us at 04493 34591.

Free Diabetes Test

Whelehans hold free diabetes screening days in our store on a regular basis. The test is painless and takes less than 5 minutes. Whelehans Pharmacy is located on Pearse St opposite the Greville Arms Hotel. You can contact us in store or at 0449334591 and we will inform you of our next diabetes screening day.

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans, log on to www.whelehans.ie or dial 04493 34591. You can find us on Facebook. You can also e-mail queries to info@whelehans.ie.



38 Pearse St, Mullingar

T. 04493 34591

W. www.whelehans.ie