

Preventing Limb Loss

Limb loss is a real fear for people living with diabetes. That's why protecting your feet and managing foot health is an important way to prevent limb loss.

For most people living with diabetes, foot ulcers are the root cause of complications that lead to limb loss. A foot ulcer is an open sore on the foot that is difficult to heal. If left untreated, foot ulcers can worsen to spread infection, gangrene, and eventually, partial or total limb loss.

Foot ulcers can be difficult to identify if a person with diabetes is suffering from neuropathy, a loss of feeling in the feet. However, even if a person has neuropathy, the identification and treatment of foot ulcers can be easy with the right strategy. Adopting a good foot health strategy can be a simple way to prevent limb loss. Take these steps to better manage foot health and reduce your risk of limb loss.

1 Have your feet examined by a doctor regularly—at least twice a year.

2 If you have neuropathy, have your shoes fit by a shoe-fitting professional.

3 Look for shoes with enough space for your feet as well as any special inserts your doctor may prescribe for you. Make sure shoes have a ½ inch of space between your toes and the front of your shoe and are wide enough that your foot doesn't overlap the shoe sole.

4 Always keep your feet protected—especially if you've been diagnosed with neuropathy. Wear well-fitting shoes whenever you're up and walking and never go barefoot.

5 Check your feet daily for wounds, blisters, or red spots and contact your doctor if you have questions or see conditions worsen.

6 If you have swelling in your feet, your doctor may prescribe compression socks to help control the swelling. Wearing the compression socks helps maintain your skin's integrity and may improve shoe fit.

7 Replace shoes annually or sooner if needed or recommended by your physician.

The majority of limb loss is preventable. By incorporating foot health management in your overall diabetes strategy, you're empowering yourself to walk easier on your diabetes journey.

Learn more at

<https://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/footcare>

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