



**Saint Elizabeth**  
*Well beyond health care*



# Lizzie's Guide to Healthy, Happy Feet

**Tips and helpful hints for healthy feet  
for people living with diabetes**

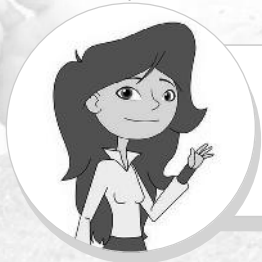
**This guide will help you to:**

- Keep your feet healthy
- Detect a problem should it arise
- Know who to go to
- Manage a wound should it occur
- Prevent infection



## Things you can do to protect your feet!

- Reduce or quit smoking to improve circulation to your feet. Create a plan and do not get discouraged. Vary your methods to help you quit.
- Do not walk barefoot anywhere, even indoors! Wear professionally fitted shoes, or orthotics in well-fitting shoes (Ideally a large toe box, no inside seam, 1cm thick sole).
- Check inside your shoes for foreign objects before putting them on.
- Check your feet and in between toes daily, use a mirror if needed.
- Do not use razor blades, cutting devices, chemical corn or wart removers. See a foot specialist monthly to have calluses, corns and thick skin removed.
- Do not use hot water bottles, heating pads or hot water baths. If your feet are cold, wear warm socks or slippers.
- Moisturize your skin with lotion containing urea. Apply over your legs and feet, but avoid the area between your toes.
- Eat a well-balanced low glycemic (diabetic) diet (include vegetables and whole grains).
- Check your sugars often until your sugar levels are stable. The CDA tool for self-monitoring of blood glucose can help figuring out how often you should check:  
<http://guidelines.diabetes.ca>
- Work with your diabetes care team to achieve your individualized blood glucose targets. Most people should aim for a fasting or before-meal blood glucose of 4.0-7.0mmol/L, and a 2-hour after-meal target of 5.0–10.0 mmol/L.
- Visit your Nurse Practitioner (NP) or Doctor (MD) every three months for your HbA1C levels, and have your kidneys and lipid levels checked.



### *Can I provide my own foot care?*

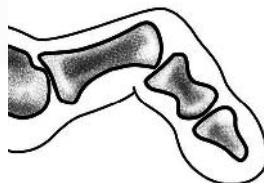
*In case of neuropathy (nerve damage) it is strongly advisable you visit a professional such as an advanced foot care nurse, a chiropodist, or a podiatrist every 4-6 weeks*

## The shape of my foot has changed

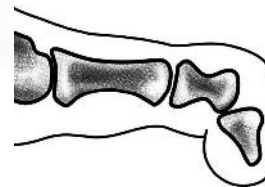
Motor Neuropathy affects the muscles of the leg and foot, which may cause your feet and toes to change shape. This puts pressure on the tips and knuckles of toes, and ball of the foot, where ulcers can occur.



Claw Toe

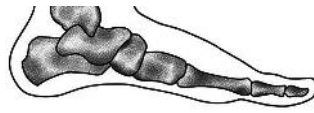


Hammer Toe

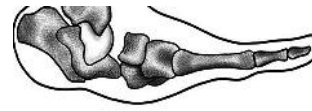


Mallet Toe

In Charcot foot the bones weaken and can fracture, increasing pressure on the mid foot and causing ulcers



Normal Foot



Charcot Foot

Check your feet and shoes as mentioned earlier. Reduce pressure areas to avoid the risk of developing an ulcer. If Charcot foot develops a CROW walker may be necessary. 'A CROW walker is a type of custom made brace that is designed to reduce pressure on the foot and the ankle. Ensure you are seeing a podiatrist, chiropodist, and/or pedorthotist regularly.



## I have a foot ulcer!

- Wash any minor scrapes or skin openings gently, apply an antiseptic cream, cover with a sterile bandage, and see your NP or MD for advice.
- **REMOVE THE CAUSE!** 50% of foot ulcers (wounds) begin due to friction and shear (rubbing caused by poorly fitting shoes). If you have a wound you need to speak to a chiropodist or pedorthotist about what options there are to take the pressure away, such as professionally fitted footwear or an offloading device. Wear it all day every day!
- If the area becomes hot, red, swollen, smelly, or painful, see your health practitioner immediately.

*Always follow the instructions your nurse has given you about your wound and how to change your dressing.*



- Healing a wound requires energy and nutrients. Ensure that your diet is balanced, provides vitamins and minerals, and includes foods that contain protein such as meats, fish, milk and peanut butter.
- Speak with a dietician about your diet. Discuss the foods you like and can afford, and create a meal plan that you are likely to stick to.

## Preventing Infection of your Wound

- Follow the wound care advice provided by your nurse, including how to clean the wound and apply the most appropriate dressing.
- Follow the advice in this leaflet related to protecting your feet, it will also help prevent infection.
- Do not walk barefoot on the ground as it is covered with bacteria which can enter an open, unprotected wound.
- Wear cotton diabetic socks designed to control moisture and reduce risk of fungal infection. Fungus causes inflamed skin that may be red, itchy and leak fluid. Contact your NP or MD if you think you have a fungal infection.
- After using the shower, wipe it down with an antiseptic solution (e.g. Lysol®).
- Keep a close eye on your blood sugar levels. Rising sugar levels might indicate the start of an infection. Early treatment will help reduce the risk.



The information in this leaflet should not replace any information your health professional gives you, but can help you to understand what they tell you, and help reduce the risk of foot problems in years to come.

## Helpful Resources

|                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| My nurse:                                                                                                                       | My family physician:                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| My nurse practitioner:                                                                                                          | My endocrinologist:                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| My chiropodist/podiatrist:                                                                                                      | My vascular specialist:                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| My social worker:                                                                                                               | My infections specialist:                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Canadian Diabetes Association:</b><br><a href="http://www.diabetes.ca">www.diabetes.ca</a>                                   | <b>Health Canada</b><br><a href="http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/dc-ma/diabete-eng.php">www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/dc-ma/diabete-eng.php</a>                                                                                                      |
| <b>Canadian Journal of Diabetes</b><br><a href="http://www.canadianjournalofdiabetes.com">www.canadianjournalofdiabetes.com</a> | <b>Public Health Agency of Canada</b><br><a href="http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/diabetes-diabete/strategy_funding-strategie_finance-eng.php">www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cd-mc/diabetes-diabete/strategy_funding-strategie_finance-eng.php</a> |
| <b>Canadian Diabetes Care Guide</b><br><a href="http://www.diabetescareguide.com">www.diabetescareguide.com</a>                 | <b>Diabetes Education Programs</b><br><a href="http://eriestclairhealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10891">eriestclairhealthline.ca/listServices.aspx?id=10891</a>                                                                        |

Be involved! Ask questions! Learn about diabetes as much as you can. A well informed diabetic patient has much improved chances to avoid diabetic foot complications.