3-Minute Home Diabetic Foot Exam

Did you know that every 20 seconds, someone loses a limb to diabetes? Three minutes could save a limb—or even a life. Follow these simple steps to conduct a foot health check-up at home, and talk to your doctor about the results.

What Is Your Risk

Have you ever had:
- Diabetes?
- A history of smoking or nicotine use?
- Sores or open wounds on your legs or feet?
- A lower limb (foot or leg) amputation?
- Surgery related to the blood vessels in your legs, such as unblocking an artery (angioplasty), inserting a stent or leg bypass surgery?

Do you currently have:
- Burning, tingling or loss of feeling in your legs, feet, or toes?
- Leg or foot pain during activity or rest?
- Changes in skin color or skin lesions (sores)?
- Swelling in parts of your legs or feet?

What to Check

Examine your feet and lower legs closely. Have someone help you if needed.
- Do you have discolored, ingrown or longer-than-normal toenails?
- Do you have thickened skin lesions, such as calluses, or corns?
- Do you have open wounds or cracked skin on your legs or feet?
- Do you have raw areas or broken skin between your toes?

Test the feeling in your foot. It may be helpful to have someone help you.
- Are there any areas where you cannot feel it if someone touches your foot gently?

Check the movement of the joints in your foot and ankle.
- Do you have trouble moving your joints freely? Is it painful or difficult to bend your toes or rotate your foot at the ankle?
- Do you have any visible deformities, such as lumps or oddly shaped or bent toes? If so, how long have you had them? Do they cause pain or rubbing in your shoes?
- Is the midfoot (the area between your ankle and your toes) hot, red, or inflamed?

Check for signs that blood is flowing to your feet normally.
- Have you noticed a decrease in hair growing on the top of your feet or your lower legs?
- Does one of your calves or feet feel warmer or cooler than the other?

Seek follow-up care:
- Share what you found with your doctor or other health care professional at your next appointment.
- If you answered yes to any of the above or noticed any sores or deformities, loss of feeling, unexplained changes in your skin or toenails or other results that worry you, make an appointment with your doctor.
- If at any point in time you notice an increase in swelling, redness or warmth in your feet, it is important you notify your physician right away.

Recommendations for daily foot care:
- Visually examine both feet, including the sole and between the toes. If you can't do this, have a family member do it.
- Keep feet dry by regularly changing shoes and socks; dry feet thoroughly after baths or exercise.
- Report any new sores, discolorations or swelling to a health care professional.

Recommendations for footwear:
- Remember that walking barefoot, even indoors, can be risky—especially if you do not have full feeling in your feet.
- Make sure your shoes are not too tight and do not rub against a particular area of the foot. If possible, have your shoes fitted for you as shoe sizes may change overtime.
- If possible, replace your shoes every year—more frequently if you notice the tread or walls of the shoes wearing thin.

Recommendations for lifestyle changes:
- Quit smoking (if applicable).
- Monitor and control your glycemic levels.

Help spread the word about healthy foot care:

Share the link to this guide (http://surgery.arizona.edu/footexam) and a picture of your feet on social media using the hash tag #Footsie4Health.

Please note: This guide is for educational and preventative purposes only. It should not be substituted for medical advice or care, nor should it be used as a diagnostic tool without the guidance of a trained healthcare professional.