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Amputation Prevention Checklist

Did you know that the feet often provide the first sign of more serious health issues, such as diabetes? That's why it's important to have your primary care physician or family doctor check your feet every time you go in for a checkup.

People with diabetes need to pay special attention to their feet and watch carefully for any signs of complications. Regular foot examinations can help reduce the risk of amputation in people with diabetes by 45 percent to 85 percent.

Here's a checklist of Do's and Don'ts for you or your family members who have diabetes:

Do's

- ✓ Inspect feet daily for cuts, blisters, scratches, redness and swelling.
- ✓ Remember to inform every doctor you visit that you have diabetes.
- ✓ Wash feet daily; always dry carefully between the toes.
- ✓ Powder feet, lightly after bathing.
- ✓ Cut toenails straight across.
- ✓ Keep feet warm and dry.
- ✓ Use a good skin lotion to protect your feet from cracking and drying, but not between toes.
- ✓ Wear loose-fitting socks to bed if feet are cold; never use heating pads or hot water bottles.
- ✓ Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes.
- ✓ Inspect the inside of shoes for foreign objects and torn linings each time you put them on.

Don'ts

- ✓ Don't walk barefoot, even indoors!
- ✓ Don't smoke. Smoking reduces blood circulation; this can lead to the loss of a leg.
- ✓ Don't cut corns or calluses yourself.
- ✓ Don't use caustic chemical agents or any other irritants for the removal of corns and calluses.
- ✓ Don't wear open-toed shoes, particularly sandals with thongs between toes.

Family members can play an important role in ensuring that their loved ones keep their feet fit for life. If someone in your family has diabetes, share this checklist with them and remind them to visit their podiatrist. Education and awareness are helpful allies in the prevention of diabetes and its complications.

