

## **Suggestions for Taking Care of the Feet for Patients With Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy (and for all neuropathy patients)**

Taking special care of your feet is one of the most important things a diabetic patient (or any other type of peripheral neuropathy patient) can do. At least 15% of all people with diabetes develop a foot ulcer at some point in time, and 6 out of every 1000 have an amputation. Many of these complications can be prevented with thorough foot care.

- Check feet daily for cuts, sores, bruises, or any abnormalities. Use a mirror or have a family member assist if needed.
- Wash your feet daily using WARM water and soap. Test water temperature with your elbow, as hot water can burn your hands and feet (without you realizing it... nerve damage).
- If your feet are cold at night, wear socks; do not use a heating pad or hot water bottles.
- Cover your feet (with the exception of the skin between your toes) with petroleum jelly, a lotion containing lanolin, or cold cream before putting on shoes and socks. Using a moisturizer helps prevent dry, cracked skin.
- Never go barefoot, especially outdoors.
- Cut your toenails straight across, and avoid leaving sharp edges.
- Wear comfortable socks and shoes. Thick soft socks are best. Wear shoes that fit appropriately and allow you to move your toes. You may want to ask your doctor about proper footwear based on your conditions.
- Examine your shoes before putting them on to make sure they have no tears, sharp edges, or objects in them that might injure your feet.
- Always have your doctor check your feet, and also keep record of anything that has changed in between visits.
- Always follow your doctor's instructions for your personal foot care.
- If you smoke, stop!