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## DIABETIC FOOT CARE

Proper foot care is essential for the diabetic patient. **Peripheral arterial disease and peripheral neuropathy** are common in diabetes. **Peripheral arterial disease** is poor circulation that occurs when the blood vessels narrow, leading to decreased blood and oxygen supply to the feet. As a result, if the skin becomes cracked or injured, sores or ulcers may develop, increasing risk of infection. Delayed healing can occur. If severe, healing will not take place and the patient will be at risk for amputation. **Diabetic peripheral neuropathy** is numbness, tingling or the loss of sensation to the feet. This causes an inability to feel injury and can lead to sores and infection.

Prevention of foot problems involves regular foot checks by a podiatrist and daily foot checks by the patient.

**PROFESSIONAL CARE:** Your feet should be evaluated by a podiatrist every 2-6 months.

At these visits, your circulation and sensation will be evaluated. Your feet will be inspected for cracks, ulcers, and sores. Nails will be trimmed, and corns and callouses will be removed. DO NOT attempt to do this yourself.

**DAILY SELF FOOT CHECKS:** Check your feet daily. Inspect the tops and bottoms, and between the toes. If you have difficulty, use a hand mirror, or ask a family member to help. If you notice any redness, swelling, cracks or sores, seek professional care immediately.

**HYGIENE:** Wash your feet daily with warm water (less than 90 degrees) and mild soap. Dry your feet, particularly between the toes. Moisturize the tops and bottoms of your feet with unscented lotion or cream. DO NOT apply between your toes. Never soak your feet, unless instructed by your doctor. Do not use heating pads or hot water bottles on your feet. Avoid use of electric blankets and mattress pads, foot warmers, and foot baths.

**SHOES AND SOCKS:** Change socks daily. Do not wear the same shoes every day. Before putting on shoes, inspect the shoe, inside and out, for rough spots or foreign objects. Avoid sandals and shoes with open backs or toes. It is recommended that your shoes be made of leather, and your socks of a breathable material (i.e. not nylon). NEVER GO BAREFOOT.

*This information is provided as an educational guide only and is not intended to substitute proper medical care or explanation by your doctor. If you have any questions, please contact our office.*