

Holiday feet

Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems can occur because the nerves and blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged.

This can affect:

- the feeling in your feet (peripheral neuropathy); and
- the circulation in your feet (ischaemia)

These changes can be very gradual and you may not notice them. This is why it is very important that you check your feet regularly, especially when on holiday as you may be more active than usual.

Keeping good control of your diabetes, cholesterol, and blood pressure will help to reduce the risk of developing problems with your feet.

This leaflet contains advice to help you to care for your feet yourself while enjoying your holiday.

Advice on keeping your feet healthy

On the journey

Long journeys can make your feet swell. Try to walk about every half hour if possible – even a short distance will help. This will keep the circulation moving and keep swelling down. Remember your feet may swell in heat, so make sure your shoes are not too tight.

Check your feet every day

You should check your feet at least once a day for any blisters, breaks in the skin, pain or any signs of infection such as swelling, heat or redness, just as you would at home.

Wash your feet every day

Wash your feet every day in warm water and mild soap. Rinse them thoroughly and dry them carefully, especially between the toes.

Moisturise your feet every day

If your skin is dry apply a moisturising cream every day, avoiding the areas between your toes. You may need to apply extra moisturising cream if your skin gets very dry in hot or cold weather.

Toenails

Carry on cutting your toenails as your general practitioner or diabetic nurse has advised you to.

Avoid walking barefoot

Always wear footwear, even on the beach. The sand can become very warm and you may burn your feet without realising. If you go into the sea, wear some sort of footwear such as plastic shoes to protect your feet.

Avoid wearing 'flip-flop' type footwear as this may cause blisters between your toes.

Prescription shoes

If you have been supplied with shoes do not wear any other shoes during your holiday (except when you are in the sea).

Minor cuts and blisters

Take a small first-aid kit containing sterile gauze dressings and Micropore tape. If you get a small blister, cut or graze, use diluted antiseptic on a gauze swab to clean the wound and tape on a dry sterile gauze dressing. Do not use cotton wool.

