

Holiday feet for people with diabetes

Advice on keeping your feet healthy

On the journey

Long journeys can make your feet swell. Try to stretch your legs by having a walk around every half hour or so, if possible - even walking a short distance will help. This will keep the circulation moving and help to keep swelling down.

Remember your feet may swell more in heat, so make sure your shoes are not too tight and if possible have an adjustable strap or lace, so that you can expand the shoe if it starts to get tight.

Daily routines

Continue your daily foot hygiene and skincare routines, just as you would at home. Use moisturising cream e.g. E45 on dry skin, which may become drier in hot or cold weather.

Remember to check your feet every day; don't forget the soles of feet and between the toes. It may help to use a mirror to see soles of feet (or ask someone to check them for you).

You need to look for changes in colour, swelling, any breaks in the skin, any discharging or broken nails. By checking the feet daily you will learn what is 'normal' for your feet and then notice when changes occur.

Wear dry clean socks and shoes every day. If you have particularly moist feet try to change shoes and socks during the day. Try to keep two pairs of everyday shoes, so that you can wear one pair, while the other dries out thoroughly.

Remember to take care of your feet; examine them daily and ask for help when a problem develops. This may help to prevent major problems!

Avoid walking barefoot

Although it may be tempting to walk barefoot, it is best not to, even on the beach. Sand, stones and tiled pool areas 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. Your Podiatrist may be able to check the fit of these before your holiday.

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

Prescription shoes

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

Avoid extreme temperatures of heat or cold

Protect your feet from sunburn with a high-factor sun protection cream (factor 30 or above) or keep them covered. Do not use dark coloured materials to protect your feet as they absorb heat and you could burn your feet.

Holiday insurance

Make sure you have adequate insurance to cover your foot and healthcare needs, you will need to inform the insurance company that you have diabetes

For advice about a foot problem whilst on holiday please seek medical attention or advice from:

- A local GP or GP out of hour's service
- NHS Walk in Centre
- Accident and Emergency Department

If you have a foot ulcer and you suddenly feel generally unwell i.e. have nausea, fatigue, vomiting, fever or chills or have raised blood glucose levels you should go to see a GP, the Walk in Centre or A&E as soon as possible. It may be that your ulcer has become infected and is causing a general infection.

First Aid Treatments

If a person has diabetes, a neglected foot injury is more likely to develop into a serious foot problem than in a person without diabetes.

Take a small first-aid kit containing:

- sterile gauze pads
- dressings, something like CosmoporE is ideal (as this is made up of a sterile dressing and adhesive, so there is no need for extra tape).

These are available at pharmacies and many supermarkets.

If you get a small blister, cut or graze, use the sterile gauze swabs and cooled boiled water to clean the wound. **DO NOT** burst blisters; just cover them with a sterile dressing. Then gently dry the area with more sterile gauze and apply the sterile dressing. Be careful not to place the sticky part of the dressing directly onto a wound. If the wound does not heal or if it gets worse then ask for professional advice.

If you discover any problems with your feet, contact your podiatry clinic or GP for advice immediately.

Happy feet will help you to enjoy your holiday.

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