

Diabetes

and Foot Problems



What is it?

Diabetes is a disease that develops from having persistent high blood glucose levels which can cause damage to blood vessels affecting the circulation, and the nerve systems in your body, by stopping important messages from getting to and from your brain.

The nerves most likely to be affected are the longest ones – those that reach all the way down to your legs and feet. This nerve damage in the lower limb is called peripheral neuropathy.

What to look out for

Any injury or hard skin, has the potential to develop into something more serious if you have diabetes. When the skin is damaged, it may not heal so easily and sometimes this can cause an ulcer to form on your foot.



The effect on feet

Diabetes may affect your feet in a number of ways. One of the early changes can be loss of sensation (peripheral neuropathy) in your feet, often starting at the toes.

Additionally, when the nerves in your feet are affected, other changes may follow, for example, your toes may start to claw and the bones in your feet can become more susceptible to fractures. Another change that can occur is reduced blood flow to your feet.

Diabetes and Foot Problems

How do I prevent it?

To manage your diabetes well, controlling blood glucose levels (along with your cholesterol and blood pressure) and leading a healthy active lifestyle is crucial. Your chances of doing this will be greatly increased if you do not smoke. By adopting these measures, you can prevent or slow down any changes to the nerves and blood vessels that supply your legs and feet.

Simple self-care measures include:

- Always check your feet every day.
- Clean and dress any cuts, or wounds promptly.
- Always wear footwear.
- Always wear shoes that fit properly.
- Never sit with your feet too close to a fire.
- Visit a podiatrist for routine care of corns and calluses if required, and have the health status of your feet checked annually.
- Avoid using corn plasters.



When should I see a podiatrist about it?

- If walking becomes more difficult.
- Applying or wearing shoes becomes more difficult.
- You experience a Tingling sensation or pins and needles in your feet.
- Part or all of your foot becomes swollen.
- Breaks in the skin open sores/blisters or a discharge, and are not showing any signs of healing within three to five days.
- Skin colour changes (redder, bluer, paler, blacker) over any part, or all of the foot.
- Swelling in your feet and/or an unusual odour.
- Part or all of your foot feels much hotter or colder than usual.
- Hard skin (callus).
- Cramp in your calves.
- Swollen, shiny smooth and taut skin on your feet and legs.

*For more information, contact us
at Tel. [0118 304 9389](tel:01183049389)
[or book online](http://www.thevaleclinic.com)*

