

# Foot Notes

## A Threat To Life—And Limb

(NAPSA)—Most of the nearly 21 million Americans living with diabetes are aware of the importance of checking blood sugar levels. However, many may not realize that checking your feet is just as important when fighting a disease that can, quite literally, leave you without a leg to stand on.

Unhealed diabetic foot wounds account for more than 60 percent of the 86,000 lower-limb amputations performed each year that are not caused by trauma, such as accidents and car crashes. The picture gets bleaker: People with diabetes are 10 times more likely to undergo an amputation and more than half of those that do will need a second amputation in the next five years.

“Diabetes can cause changes in the skin on your feet as well as nerve damage, which can impair your sensation of feeling,” says clinician Katy Rowland. On the front lines fighting to save limbs, the senior vice president of clinical services for National Healing Corporation explains, “Visual inspections and proper foot care should be part of the daily routine for someone managing diabetes.”

The American Diabetes Association estimates that comprehensive foot care programs can reduce amputation rates by 45 to 85 percent. Rowland offers these tips:

- Inspect your feet daily. Check your feet and between your toes for blisters, cuts and scratches. For hard-to-see areas, use an unbreakable mirror or ask someone to help you.
- Tell your doctor about any wounds, redness or blisters on your legs or feet. Have your feet



**Diabetes-related wounds account for more than three in five non-trauma-related amputations in the U.S.**

examined during doctor visits at least four times a year.

- Don't pull loose pieces of skin off your feet. See a health care professional to have them removed.
- Avoid crossing your legs. This can put pressure on the nerves and blood vessels, possibly causing damage.
- Never go barefoot, and always wear properly fitting socks made of cotton and wool. Change your socks daily and your shoes twice a day.
- Cut your toenails straight across. Don't trim too short, and use an emery board to smooth corners of toenails or ingrown nails.
- Seek medical treatment if a leg or foot wound has not healed in 30 days or shows signs of infection such as increased pain, redness or swelling, foul wound odor or a change in color or amount of drainage from the wound.

To find a wound healing center, visit [www.nationalhealing.com](http://www.nationalhealing.com).