

Feet First

Diabetic Footcare

In this addition of Feet First we are focusing on Diabetic Footcare.

In Croydon there are over 17,000 known people with Diabetes.

Diabetes may affect your feet in a number of ways and in some cases can lead to serious complications.

One of the early changes can be loss of sensation in your feet, often starting at the toes. Diabetes damages the nerves, this is known as peripheral neuropathy.

Another change that can occur is reduced blood flow to your feet.

Diabetes may also affect your ability to heal and reduce your ability to fight infection. It is extremely important that you take particular care of any scratches, cuts or blisters to your feet.

Diabetes can also affect the joints making them stiffer

People with diabetes are more likely to be admitted to hospital with a foot ulceration than with any other diabetic complication.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a metabolic disorder, characterized by high blood sugar (glucose) levels.

Diabetes cannot be cured, but can be managed with proper medical care, diet and exercise.

There are 3 types

- Type 1 occurs most often in children and young adults. It is an autoimmune disease. The immune system destroys insulin producing cells in the pancreas
- Type 2 accounts for over 90% of cases. In most cases insulin is produced but the person is unable to utilize it. Usually occurs in over 40's who are overweight. Genetic factors

can increase the risk.

- Gestational Diabetes occurs during pregnancy and usually goes way after childbirth. But those that develop it have an increased risk of developing type 2 later in life.

Signs and Symptoms may include

- ◆ Blurred Vision
- ◆ Constant hunger
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Frequent urination
- ◆ Increased thirst

Day to day advice

- Check your feet every day
- Look for any colour changes, cuts, blisters, redness, swelling or nail problems.
- Wash your feet in lukewarm water daily. Dry carefully.
- Moisturise your feet, but not between the toes as this can encourage fungal infection.
- Cut nails carefully and straight across.
- NEVER trim hard skin or corns yourself
- Clean and dress any cuts, scratches or wounds and see a Podiatrist.
- Wear clean dry socks and change them daily.
- Keep your feet warm and dry
- Always wear shoes that fit properly. They should not mark the skin or cause callouses/corns.
- Shake out your shoes and inspect them inside before putting them on.
- Never sit with your feet too close to a fire. Always remember to remove the hot water bottle or switch off the electric blanket before going to bed
- Never walk barefoot even at home.
- Get periodic foot checks
- Take care of your diabetes, control blood sugar levels
- Don't Smoke. Smoking restricts blood flow to your feet.

What is an infection?

An infection occurs when the body is unable to protect itself from micro-organisms such as bacteria, viruses and fungi.

If you have diabetes you may be more likely to get an infection especially if your diabetes is poorly controlled or you have lost sensation in your feet. This is because you may not realise you have an infection until it has already started to spread.

If you notice any of the signs of infection contact your GP, Diabetes Nurse or Podiatrist IMMEDIATELY.

If you can't contact them or they can't see you that day go to A&E immediately



Signs of Infection

- ◆ COLOUR usually bright pink or red; brown or black skin may become darker
- ◆ PAIN not always the case if you have neuropathy
- ◆ SWELLING
- ◆ MOVEMENT may be limited due to pain and swelling
- ◆ TEMPERATURE area feels warm/hot to touch
- ◆ PUS the area may be weeping a yellow/green pus.



DON'T DELAY CONTACT

020 8274 6825

Foot Health Protection Team

The podiatry department has a dedicated Foot protection team, led by Podiatrist Adrian Turner.

The department has three locations where specialist podiatrists treat diabetic foot ulcers. These are at Leander Road Primary Care Centre, Purley Clinic and Croydon University Hospital.

If you present with a diabetic foot ulcer you can expect the podiatrist to manage this in the community, referring into the hospital if vascular intervention is required.

The service works in parallel with the vascular team, diabetes team and tissue viability to ensure you receive the best possible care.

The podiatrists also work closely with other healthcare professionals that may be involved in your overall care, including the orthotist, dietician, physiotherapist.

The Croydon University Vascular Unit provides

urgent and elective patient centred care for patients with diabetic foot problems as part of the multidisciplinary Foot Protection Team.

These services are provided at both Croydon University Hospital and Purley Hospital sites by Mr Josh Derodra (Consultant Vascular Surgeon) and Miss Stella Vig (Consultant Vascular and General Surgeon).

There is a dedicated vascular inpatient ward and an active Chronic Wound and Amputation Prevention Centre. This unit houses the Vascular Ultrasound Department and physiotherapy centre.

There are established links with the diabetes team as part of the Diabetic Vascular Unit as well as podiatrists within the Diabetic Foot Protection Team

Consult your Podiatrist immediately if

- You notice a break in the skin or discharge
- The skin changes colour, becoming redder, bluer, paler, or black over part or all the foot
- New swelling in your feet
- Slow healing wound
- Infection
- Pain in feet or legs

RAPID RESPONSE TELEPHONE LINE

The podiatry department has a dedicated telephone for diabetic foot emergencies. Messages can be left and will be answered between the hours of 9am–5pm, Mon–Fri.

Telephone 020 8274 6825

What to expect at a foot examination

- Legs and Feet examined annually
- Asked questions about present and past medical health/medication.
- Neuropathy testing—testing for numbness in your feet. May use a fine plastic strand called a monofilament, or test vibration with a tuning fork.



- Circulation testing. Pulses in the feet will be checked to see how well the blood is circulating to your feet.
- May use a machine called a Doppler to hear the sound of blood moving in the arteries.



- Foot Inspection. Checking for corns, calluses and nail