

# FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

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## DIABETES: A PATH TO POOR CIRCULATION?

IF YOU HAVE DIABETES, EVEN IF IT IS WELL MANAGED, YOU ARE AT INCREASED RISK TO DEVELOP VASCULAR DISEASE. VASCULAR DISEASE IS THE BUILDUP OF PLAQUE AND CHOLESTEROL IN YOUR ARTERIES THROUGHOUT YOUR BODY.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT PODIATRISTS ARE OFTEN THE FIRST PHYSICIANS TO SPOT SIGNS OF VASCULAR DISEASE?**

That's why it is so important to not only include a podiatrist on your diabetes management team, but also to learn the signs of both venous and arterial ulcers, a common sign of vascular disease. Here is what to look for on your next daily foot exam:

### COMMON SIGNS OF A VENOUS ULCER:

- Shallow or superficial appearance
- Irregular shape
- Small to large
- Brownish in appearance
- Skin tends to be thick
- Painful, usually related to edema, or swelling

### YOU'LL MOST LIKELY FIND A VENOUS ULCER:

- On the lower leg and ankle

### COMMON SIGNS OF AN ARTERIAL ULCER:

- Punched-out appearance
- Smooth wound edges
- Cool to the touch
- Skin is pale, shiny, taut, and thin
- Minimal to no hair growth on the limbs
- Painful, especially at night

### YOU'LL MOST LIKELY FIND AN ARTERIAL ULCER:

- On the side of the foot, but one can occur anywhere on the lower leg or foot



## FOOT EXAM

NOT SURE HOW TO CONDUCT YOUR DAILY FOOT EXAM? FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS:

- 1 Check for loss of sensation in the feet, called neuropathy.
- 2 Examine skin for calluses, blisters, sores, excessively dry or cracked skin, or any other unusual conditions, especially between the toes.
- 3 Look for signs of decreased circulation such as thin, fragile, shiny skin with loss of hair.
- 4 Check the feet for extreme temperatures (excessive warmth or coldness).
- 5 Inspect nails for thickening, ingrown corners, excessive length, and fungal infection.
- 6 Inspect socks, tights, and/or pantyhose for blood or any discharge.
- 7 Examine footwear for torn linings, foreign objects like rocks or small pebbles, improper fit, and irritating seams.



**REMEMBER:** If you have trouble reaching your feet to complete your daily foot exam, prop up a mirror on the floor or ask a friend or family member for help.

## YOUR DIABETES CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Get a full foot exam by a podiatrist at least twice a year.
- ✓ Conduct a daily foot exam (see above for instructions).
- ✓ Make an appointment with your podiatrist as soon as you develop any foot pain, redness, or sores.
- ✓ Ask about the right shoes for you.
- ✓ Make sure your feet are checked at every health-care visit.

DOCTORS OF PODIATRIC MEDICINE ARE PODIATRIC PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, ALSO KNOWN AS PODIATRISTS, QUALIFIED BY THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND EXPERIENCE TO DIAGNOSE AND TREAT CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE FOOT, ANKLE, AND RELATED STRUCTURES OF THE LEG.