



Dr. Mark W. Enander, DPM.  
Podiatric Medicine & Surgery  
333 School Street, Suite 203  
Pawtucket, RI 02860  
Tel; 401-725-8989

As a podiatrist in practice for 17 years, and having treated thousands of patients with diabetic foot problems, the following is a compendium of my thoughts on foot care and living with diabetes. I must emphasize the importance of taking control of your diabetes (blood sugar/glucose) and thus preventing complications such as blindness, amputation, etc.

1. **Check your feet daily.** You must check/inspect your feet daily. If you see something that does not look right, see your podiatrist. A callous can lead to an ulcer; a cut can lead to an infection. Do not wait, **GET IT CHECKED**. If you cannot check your feet, put a mirror on the floor and move your feet around to thoroughly inspect the bottom of your feet. One final thought, Dr. Harkless (an expert on diabetic foot care) would always say “You see what you look for, you recognize what you know”. Do not be afraid to see your podiatrist if you see something that does not look right. We are here to prevent complications.
2. **After bathing dry well between your toes and apply some powder.** This is important because one it makes you inspect between your toes and two, it can help prevent athlete’s foot (a fungal infection of the skin). What kind of powder you use is NOT important.
3. **Soaking your feet daily unless instructed by your doctors is not recommended.** Water is not sterile (free of bacteria). Thus if you have a cut or wound on your foot you could potentially cause an infection. If instructed to soak your feet **NEVER** use hot water as this could cause a burn and lead to an infection. This is especially true if you have neuropathy, which is loss of sensation to your feet.
4. **Apply skin cream to the top and bottom of your feet at least once a day if your skin is very dry, twice a day.** Skin is the primary barrier for preventing an infection. When skin becomes dry and cracked, bacteria can enter the skin and lead to a skin infection known as cellulites. Do not use antifungal or medicated creams unless instructed by your podiatrist.
5. **Always inspect your shoes before you put them on.** Check the soles and the inside of the shoes. It is a good habit to turn your shoes over and shake them out. This will get rid of any rocks that may have gotten inside. Just a quick story, during my residency a patient with an ulcer (open sore) on bottom of his heel. After a few weeks the ulcer healed and he went back to his shoes. One

week later he returned with the same ulcer. After controlling my anger, I inspected his shoes only to find a nail through his heel. He had no feeling in his feet (neuropathy). The point, CHECK YOUR SHOES.

6. **Always cut your nails straight across.** If you are cutting your own nails you should always cut them straight across. Do not cut the corners or cut them too short as this can lead to an infection. If you have nails which are thick/discolored also known as mycotic nails (a fungal infection of the nail) have ingrown nails, or simply cannot cut your nails then see your podiatrist.
7. **Never remove your own corns or callouses.** Callouses/corns are thick hard skin related to pressure such as hammertoes [curled toes] and bunions [a large bump on the side of the big toe]. This means DO NOT use callous removers, wart medicines and medicated corn pads as these all contain acid. Acids simply breakdown skin, both calloused and non calloused and can lead to an opening or sore known as an ulcer. Always consult your Podiatrist. I have seen many amputations as the result of these acids.
8. **Never walk barefoot.** Even if you have normal sensation it is a good habit to always wear shoes and slippers. With time you may develop neuropathy of the feet [loss of feeling or sensation] and thus may step on a piece of glass or other object which again may lead to an infection. The habits we develop early in life tend to remain. NO BAREFOOT WALKING.
9. **See your podiatrist at least once a year and more frequently if needed. Your feet need to last you your lifetime. It is important to decrease the amputation rate in order to stay active and lead a normal life. ‘Believe me your feet will thank you for it.’**

I will welcome any questions or thoughts you may have.