Diabetes and Foot Care

Diabetes may cause you to have a poor blood supply (*circulation*) to your legs and feet. Because of this, the skin may be thinner, break easier, and heal slower. You also may have nerve damage in your legs and feet causing decreased feeling. You may not notice minor injuries to your feet that could lead to serious problems or infections. Taking care of your feet is one of the most important things you can do for yourself.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOOT CARE

- **Do not** go barefoot. Bare feet are easily injured.
- Check your feet daily for blisters, cuts, and redness.
- Wash your feet with warm water (not hot) and mild soap. Pat your feet and between your toes until completely dry.
- Apply a moisturizing lotion that does not contain alcohol or petroleum jelly to the dry skin on your feet and to dry brittle toenails. **Do not** put it between your toes.
- Trim your toenails straight across. **Do not** dig under them or around the cuticle.
- **Do not** cut corns or calluses, or try to remove them with medicine.
- Wear clean cotton socks or stockings every day. Make sure they are not too tight. **Do not** wear knee high stockings since they may decrease blood flow to your legs.
- Wear leather shoes that fit properly and have enough cushioning. To break in new shoes, wear them just a few hours a day to avoid injuring your feet.
- Wear shoes at all times, even in the house.
- **Do not** cross your legs. This may decrease the blood flow to your feet.
- If you find a minor scrape, cut, or break in the skin on your feet, keep it and the skin around it clean and dry. These areas may be cleansed with mild soap and water. **Do not** use peroxide, alcohol, iodine or Merthiolate.
- When you remove an adhesive bandage, be sure not to harm the skin around it.
- If you have a wound, look at it several times a day to make sure it is healing.
- **Do not** use heating pads or hot water bottles. Burns can occur. If you have lost feeling in your feet or legs, you may not know it is happening until it is too late.
- Report any cuts, sores or bruises to your caregiver. **Do not wait!**

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have an injury that is not healing or you notice redness, numbness, burning, or tingling.
- Your feet always feel cold.
- You have pain or cramps in your legs and feet.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is increasing redness, swelling, or increasing pain in the wound.
- There is a red line that goes up your leg.
- Pus is coming from a wound.
- You develop an unexplained oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), or as your caregiver suggests.
- You notice a bad smell coming from an ulcer or wound.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 12/15/2001 Document Re-Released: 10/15/2010
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