Prescription shoes

Prescription shoes

If you have been supplied with shoes, they will have been made to a prescription. You should follow the instructions your orthotist (the person who designed or prescribed your shoes) or podiatrist gives you. At first you should wear the shoes for short periods around your home, checking for any problems such as redness caused by rubbing or pressure. If this occurs, you should contact your podiatrist or orthotist immediately.

When you and the person who prescribed your shoes are happy with the comfort and fit of the first pair, you will be supplied with a second pair. These should be the only shoes you wear.
It is important that you wear these shoes inside and outside the house.

Shoes will normally be prescribed with insoles. These are an important part of your footwear and you should only remove them if your podiatrist or orthotist advises you to. It is important that you check the inside of your shoes every day to make sure no small objects have fallen in, and that there is no damage to the insole or lining.

If you notice any wear or damage to the shoes, you should contact your orthotist or podiatrist so that they can be repaired.

Whoever provided your shoes will advise you about any repairs or alterations to make sure that they still match your prescription.

Socks, stockings and tights

You should always change your socks, stockings or tights every day. They should not have bulky seams and they should not have elasticated tops. Some high-street shops sell suitable products - ask your podiatrist for details. All your socks, stockings and tights should be the right size for your feet.

Remember: if you are not sure about any shoes, socks, stockings or tights you are wearing, or new shoes you have bought, your podiatrist will be happy to advise you.

Individual advice

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Your current foot risk level

Your most recent foot screening has shown that your risk of developing foot complications and foot ulcers because of your diabetes is:
Low / Medium / High

Local contact numbers

Podiatry Department:

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GP Clinic:

.....

Orthotics Department:

.....

Based on the original leaflet produced by the Scottish Diabetes Group - Foot Action Group, with help from service users

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We would welcome your feedback on this leaflet. Please send it to the College of Podiatry at
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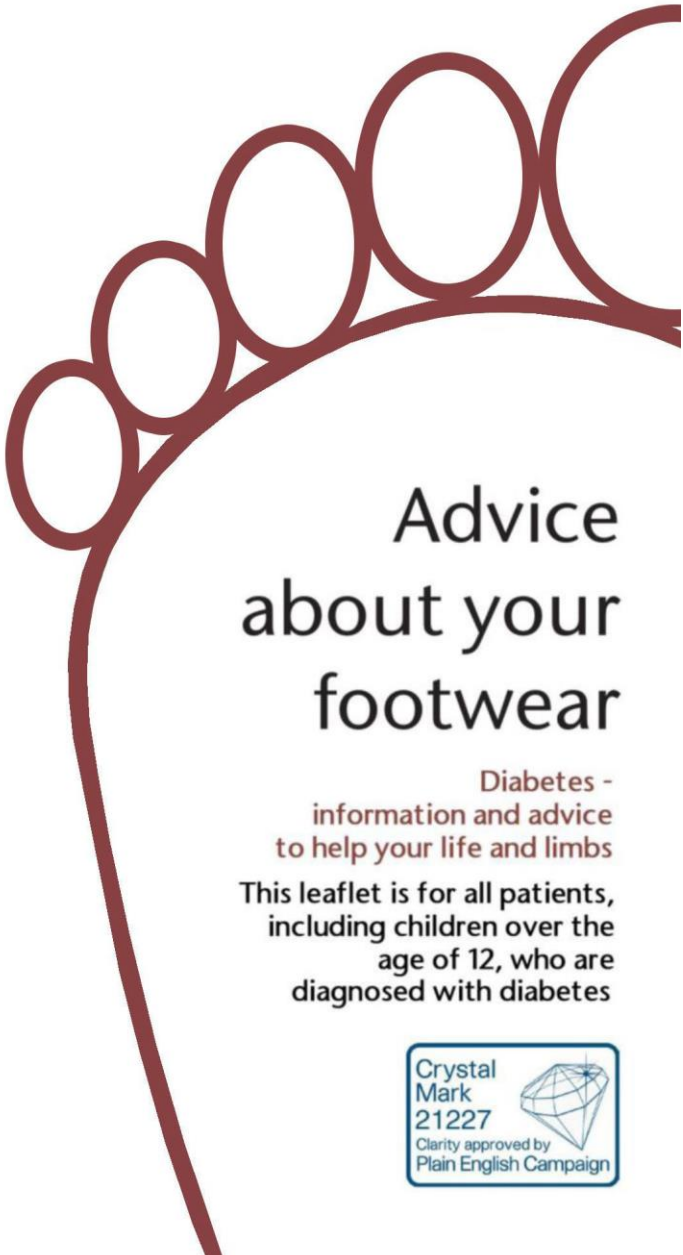

Advice about your footwear

Diabetes - information and advice to help your life and limbs

This leaflet is for all patients, including children over the age of 12, who are diagnosed with diabetes

Crystal Mark 21227
Clarity approved by Plain English Campaign

Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems can occur because the nerves and blood vessels supplying your feet are damaged.

This can affect:

- the feeling in your feet (peripheral neuropathy); and
- the circulation in your feet (ischaemia).

These changes can be very gradual and you may not notice them. This is why it is important that every year you have your feet screened by a suitably-trained professional or assessed by a podiatrist. You can then agree on a treatment plan to suit your needs.

This leaflet gives you advice about wearing the most appropriate shoes, taking into account the shape of your feet and your diabetes.

Prescription footwear and insoles can reduce the risk of ulcers but cannot remove the risk altogether.

Unsuitable shoes or shoes that don't fit properly are the most common cause of foot problems in people with diabetes.

If you smoke, you are strongly advised to stop. Smoking affects your circulation and can increase the risk of amputation.

Footwear advice

Check your feet and shoes

Check your feet every day

Check your feet every time you remove your shoes. Also remember to remove your socks, stockings or tights and check for any redness or blisters.

Check your shoes

Check the bottom of your shoes before putting them on to make sure that nothing sharp such as a pin, nail or glass has pierced the outer sole. Also, run your hand inside each shoe to check that no small objects such as small stones have fallen in.

The shape of your feet

Your feet can change shape over time. So, when you buy new shoes, always check their fit carefully.

Buying new shoes

Get your feet measured

If possible have your feet measured and your new shoes fitted properly.

Well-fitting shoes

Make sure your shoes are long enough, deep enough, and wide enough for your feet. If your shoes are too tight they will press on your toes.

Always try on both shoes

When buying new shoes, always try on both shoes. Most people's feet are slightly different sizes.

Buy your own shoes

If possible you should go to the shoe shop yourself and not ask somebody else to buy your shoes for you.

Wear new shoes around the house

Wear new shoes around the house for short periods (20 minutes) and then check your feet. Look for problems such as redness caused by rubbing or pressure. If this happens, you can usually return the shoes to the shop, but only if you have not worn them outside.

Advice on new shoes

If you are not sure if your new shoes are suitable, ask your podiatrist for advice before you wear them.

Recommended footwear

Types of shoes

A well-fitting shoe, boot or trainer with laces or a strap fastening will give your feet the best support. These fastenings will help to keep your foot firmly in place inside your footwear which will help prevent rubbing.

Avoid slip-on shoes and slippers as they give less support. Stop wearing slippers once you have been given prescribed footwear and insoles.

Low heels

Your heel should not be more than 3 centimetres (1¼ inches).

Natural materials

Where possible the uppers (top) of your shoes should be made from a natural material such as soft leather. Leather will fit to your foot without causing any rubbing and will help to prevent your feet from sweating.

Check the condition of your prescribed footwear and have repairs done when necessary.

Wear and tear

Signs of wear and tear

Check your shoes for signs of wear, such as rough edges in seams or linings, and worn soles or heels. Always check your shoes are in good condition and replace them whenever there are signs of wear and tear that can't be repaired.

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