

Don't Let Diabetes Get a Foothold on You



Latin Americans and African-Americans are at a greater risk for developing diabetes, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

In fact, Latin Americans are nearly twice as likely to get diabetes and five times less likely to visit a doctor for medical problems than Caucasians.

The disease can impact many parts of the body including nerve and vascular damage, which can result in a loss of sensation in the feet. Poor circulation can lead to hard to heal foot ulcers. If not treated in time, the American Podiatric Medical Association warns, these complication can result in lower-limb amputations for people with diabetes.

A podiatrist plays an important role in the diabetes management team. Regular visits to an APMA member podiatrist, as part of a comprehensive foot care plan, can help reduce the rate of lower-limb amputations by 45 percent to 85 percent.

Follow these simple at-home tips to make sure your feet are as healthy as possible:

- **Check your feet every day**

Especially if you have a loss of sensation, visually inspecting your feet daily will help you notice any cuts, sores, blisters or changes in the skin or toenails. You can use a hand mirror to help you check the bottoms of your feet. If you notice a change in your feet, see your podiatrist immediately.

- **Clean your feet daily**

Washing your feet will help avoid the buildup of bacteria. Be sure to wash in warm water, rather than hot. Completely dry your feet after washing and pay special attention to drying between the toes.

- **Keep skin healthy**

By lightly applying lotion or moisturizer to your feet, you can help prevent against dry, flaky or cracked skin. Use lotion on the tops and bottoms of your feet, but never between the toes. Excess moisture between the toes can lead to infection.

- **Always wear shoes and socks**

Soft, lightly padded socks will help you avoid blisters and sores. Socks with no seams are best. Also, examine inside your shoes to be sure there is nothing harmful that will injure your feet.

- **Choose shoes that fit well and protect your feet**

One of the best ways to avoid injuries to your feet is to wear sturdy and supportive shoes at all times. For more information, visit www.apma.org.

American Podiatric Medical Association

9312 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD 20814

Telephone 301.571.9200

Telephone 800.FOOTCARE

Facsimile 301.530.2752

www.apma.org

Key Messages

2006 “Knock Your Socks Off”



- The American Podiatric Medical Association’s “Knock Your Socks Off” campaign raises awareness about the prevalence of diabetes and the serious consequences it can have on the feet. It encourages patients to take off their shoes and socks and have their feet examined as part of their routine medical checkups.
- Feet, which are often overlooked during regular medical checkups, can reveal the first signs and symptoms of diabetes and other serious medical conditions.
- Diabetes can cause poor blood flow and nerve damage in the legs and feet, which can lead to the inability to feel pain. Small sores and cuts that go unnoticed can easily become serious problems if left untreated. In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of lower-limb amputations.
- Ethnicity plays a large factor in a person’s risk for developing diabetes. Hispanic/Latino Americans are nearly twice as likely to develop diabetes as non-Hispanic Americans.
- Currently diabetes affects 2.5 million Hispanic/Latino Americans, and half of those people affected by the disease don’t know they have it.
- Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the Hispanic/Latino American community and the fourth leading cause of death in women and elderly.
- Having a family history of diabetes can increase a person’s risk for developing the disease. Because diabetes is so prevalent among the Hispanic/Latino American community, it is important for diabetes to become a family affair. Parents should speak openly about the disease with their children and about their potential risk of developing the disease.
- Feet can show a number of diabetes warning signs and symptoms such as redness, numbness, swelling, skin feeling cold to the touch from decreased blood circulation, inflammation and any noticeable changes to the feet such as non-healing wounds or sores.
- The type and severity of complications suffered as a result of diabetes varies from person to person. For this reason treating diabetes requires a team approach encompassing physicians from different specialties, including a podiatrist, a dentist, an eye doctor and a primary care physician.
- A comprehensive foot care treatment plan can reduce amputation rates by 45 to 85 percent.
- Unlike type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes is highly preventable. Excess weight and inactivity contribute to the large number of type 2 diabetes cases. Having an active lifestyle and adopting a healthy diet can significantly decrease a person’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes.
- For more information about diabetes and the American Podiatric Medical Association’s Knock Your Socks Off campaign, visit apma.org/diabetes. You can also use the “find a podiatrist” feature on APMA’s homepage to search for an APMA member podiatrist in your area.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Erin Wendel
elwendel@apma.org, 301.581.9227
Craig Fritz
cmfritz@apma.org, 301.581.9220

A NEW DIABETES CAMPAIGN URGES HISPANIC AMERICANS TO UNCOVER THEIR FEET “DESCUBRA SUS PIES”

The American Podiatric Medical Association reports checking the feet regularly can reduce the number of lower limb amputations by 45 to 85 percent.

Bethesda, Md. – Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic lower-limb amputations in the United States. Hispanic Americans are almost twice as likely to suffer from diabetes related lower-limb amputations as non-Hispanic Caucasians. For this reason, the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) is urging Hispanic Americans, who are considered high risk for type 2 diabetes, to take off their shoes and socks at every doctor’s visit. The effort is part of APMA’s “Descubra Sus Pies” campaign, which means discover you feet—uncover your feet, and mirrors the association’s “Knock Your Socks Off” diabetes campaign in English. The feet, which are often overlooked during routine examinations, can potentially reveal the first warning signs of serious diseases, such as diabetes.

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“Studies show amputation rates as a result of diabetes could be significantly reduced if more people would simply have their feet examined more frequently,” said APMA President David Schofield, DPM. “Since the number of Hispanic Americans with diabetes is growing at an alarming rate, APMA’s ‘Descubra Sus Pies’ campaign encourages those at risk to take preventative measures before the disease escalates.”

Almost 10 percent of Americans with diabetes are Hispanic. The “Descubra Sus Pies” campaign stresses the importance of uncovering the feet to identify the following potential diabetes warning signs:

- Numbness
- Redness
- Swelling
- Cold to the touch due to a lack of blood circulation
- Inflammation
- Loss of hair on the toes

And if any of the warning signs are detected, the APMA recommends contacting a podiatrist for further examination.

Identifying diabetes warning signs in the feet and educating Hispanic Americans about the importance of early diabetes detection are topics featured in the campaign’s national radio advertisements. The ads will air in designated cities across the country starting in October to coincide with Hispanic Heritage Month. In addition, APMA member podiatrists will participate in local health fairs in select cities this fall to help spread the word about the “Descubra Sus Pies” campaign.

For more information about APMA’s “Descubra Sus Pies” campaign or to request a media kit, call 301.581.9227 or visit www.apma.org/diabetes.

Founded in 1912, the American Podiatric Medical Association represents the nation’s premier foot and ankle physicians. The Association has component societies in 53 locations in the U.S. and its territories and a membership of more than 12,500 doctors of podiatric medicine. For free foot health information, contact APMA at 1-800-FOOTCARE (1-800-366-8227) or visit www.apma.org on the Web.

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DON'T LET DIABETES GET A Foothold ON YOU
Radio Public Service Announcements



DID YOU KNOW DIABETES CAN CAUSE NERVE AND VASCULAR DAMAGE IN THE FEET? THAT'S WHY A PODIATRIST IS AN IMPORTANT PLAYER ON YOUR DIABETES MANAGEMENT TEAM. IF NOT TREATED IN TIME, THE AMERICAN PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION WARNS, COMPLICATIONS FROM THE DISEASE CAN RESULT IN LOWER-LIMB AMPUTATIONS. BUT A COMPREHENSIVE FOOT CARE PLAN COORDINATED BY AN APMA MEMBER PODIATRIST CAN HELP REDUCE THE RATE OF LOWER-LIMB AMPUTATIONS BY UP TO EIGHTY-FIVE PERCENT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.APMA.ORG/DIABETES.

(30 SECONDS)

DIABETES ATTACKS YOUR ENTIRE BODY BUT CAN BE ESPECIALLY BRUTAL TO YOUR FEET, WARNS THE AMERICAN PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION. IN FACT, IT CAN CAUSE POOR CIRCULATION, WHICH CAN LEAD TO HARD-TO-HEAL FOOT ULCERS. SO IF YOU HAVE DIABETES, DON'T LET THE DISEASE GET A Foothold ON YOU, AND REMEMBER THESE TIPS FOR PROPER FOOT CARE: CHECK YOUR FEET DAILY FOR CUTS, SORES OR BLISTERS THAT DON'T HEAL; VISIT YOUR APMA MEMBER PODIATRIST REGULARLY; AND CHOOSE STURDY SHOES THAT FIT WELL. VISIT WWW.APMA.ORG/DIABETES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PROPER FOOT CARE.

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Questions for Your Doctor

Primary care physician: If you have diabetes or a family history of the disease, it's important to know your primary care physician is capable of leading your diabetes management team. Whether you are seeking advice about diabetes for the first time or you are searching for a doctor who can plan your care, there are several questions to ask a new physician.

Do you have special training in diabetes care?

It is vital that your primary care physician be knowledgeable in the latest treatment methods.

What are your office hours? Who covers nights and weekends?

Since diabetes is a difficult disease to manage, it is important that you can reach a medical professional at all hours of the day.

Are you associated with other diabetes professionals, so I will benefit from a health care team?

Because diabetes can attack many parts of the body, an eye doctor, a dentist and a podiatrist are all essential parts of your diabetes care team. A dietician can help you choose appropriate foods and a nurse educator can teach you and your family about the disease.

What are your fees?

Whether you have insurance or not, it is important that your primary care physician understand your financial situation.

Podiatrist: A podiatrist is a doctor trained to care for the feet and lower legs. Because the disease can cause poor blood flow and nerve damage in the lower legs, foot problems are more common in people with diabetes. Small cuts, calluses or sores that don't heal can quickly turn into serious, even limb threatening, issues. Any noticeable changes in the feet should be examined by a podiatrist. Inspecting the feet at home on a daily basis is a great way to catch a problem before it becomes serious. Ask these questions when choosing a podiatrist to be part of your diabetes health care team.

Are you familiar with the foot problems diabetes can cause?

Visiting a podiatrist that is up to date on the latest diabetes care methods will allow you to have the best care possible.

How many of your patients have diabetes?

A podiatrist that deals with diabetes on a regular basis will be in tune to your special needs.

Will you work with my primary care physician?

A team approach is the best way for you to get complete care. Your eye doctor, dentist, dietician and diabetes educator are also important parts of your health care team.

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True and False Quiz: Diabetes and the Feet



If you're among the close to 21 million Americans that have diabetes, even minor or ordinary foot problems can lead to serious complications. Proper foot care by an APMA member podiatrist is an important part of any diabetes management plan. Whether you've had diabetes for years or have been recently diagnosed, be sure to take off your shoes and socks to inspect your feet. Take this true and false quiz to find out how much you know about diabetes and foot care.

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1. Diabetes is the nation's leading cause of adult blindness, lower limb amputations and kidney failure.

TRUE – Diabetes is a systematic disease that attacks the entire body. You may be able to detect early signs and symptoms of diabetes by having regular foot screenings by an APMA member podiatrist or your primary care physician.

2. Even though someone in my family has diabetes, I don't need to worry about it.

FALSE – Along with age and obesity, heredity can increase your chances of developing diabetes. In fact, Hispanic/Latino Americans, African Americans and Native Americans are nearly twice as likely to develop the disease.

3. I've only had diabetes for a few years, so I don't have to worry as much about my feet.

FALSE – All people with diabetes can have problems with their feet, which could lead to an amputation. Comprehensive foot care plans can reduce amputation rates by 45 percent to 85 percent. People with diabetes should have their feet screened on a regular basis by an APMA member podiatrist.

4. I need to educate my family on the dangers of diabetes.

TRUE – Diabetes is a family affair. Everyone in the family should know about the disease and should be helping those with diabetes control it.

5. As long as my feet do not hurt, I don't need to visit a podiatrist.

FALSE - Diabetes can lead to loss of sensation or numbness of the extremities. This means you may not feel the pain, even if it is a significant problem. Any noticeable change in the feet such as redness, swelling, sores that don't heal, loss of hair or scaly skin may indicate a more serious problem.

6. Having diabetes makes my feet more susceptible to common infections, such as athlete's foot and fungal toenails.

TRUE - The body's decreased immune response in people with diabetes can make common foot infections more prevalent.

7. My regular doctor will tell me everything I need to know about how to care for my feet if I have diabetes.

FALSE - Diabetes is a complicated disease, affecting many different parts of the body. For this reason, your diabetes treatment team should include various specialists, including podiatrists, who have been trained to focus on different areas from head to toe.