



ASSURE[®] BRILLIANCE

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE & SUPPORT PROGRAM

Diabetes and Lower-extremity Amputation Prevention

Diabetes is a known contributor to issues related to the foot. Small problems, if left untreated, can lead to greater complications.

Neuropathy is one of the most frequent culprits of foot problems.¹ As nerve damage occurs, due to high blood glucose levels, one's ability to recognize heat, cold or pain is diminished. The loss of sensation can easily lead to a foot injury, including blisters, calluses and ulcers. In addition to a lack of sensitivity, high blood glucose levels can cause the blood vessels in the foot and leg to narrow and harden causing poor circulation to occur. This can lead to what is known as peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

The combination of reduced sensitivity due to nerve damage and poor circulation to the feet

may contribute to an increased risk for infections or foot ulcers. If left unchecked, this may lead to an increased risk of nontraumatic lower-extremity amputation (NLEA).

The rate of NLEA has declined by 65% among adults, 40 and over with diabetes reported between the years of 1996 and 2008.² Unfortunately, people with diabetes are still eight times more likely to have an NLEA. Evidence suggests that people with diabetes may prevent amputations of lower extremities with tighter control of blood glucose levels, and proper disease management and foot care.³

Steps Your Residents Can Take to Improve Their Foot Health⁴

- Check feet daily for redness, sores, cuts and ulcers
 - Report changes to health care provider
- Wash feet daily in warm water
 - Do not soak feet
- Dry feet thoroughly, including between toes
- Apply moisturizer lotion, cream or petroleum jelly to the foot
 - Do not apply between toes
- Wear clean, lightly padded socks
- Wear well-fitted shoes
- Schedule annual, or more frequent, foot examinations with a health care provider
- Choose exercise activities that are easy on the feet
- Manage blood glucose levels
- Eat a healthy diet
- Eliminate smoking



References

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3. Yanfeng L, Nilka R, Gregg E, et al. Declining rates of hospitalization for nontraumatic lower-extremity amputation in the diabetic population aged 40 years or older: U.S., 1988-2008. *Diabetes Care*. 2012(35)273.
4. National Diabetes Information Clearing House. Prevent diabetes problems: Keep your feet healthy. www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-topics/Diabetes/prevent-diabetes-problems/Pages/keep-feet-healthy.aspx. Published: Feb 2014. Accessed: Aug 2015.