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care you can trust

FOOT CARE GUIDE FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

A Comprehensive Resource from Soleful Harmony

By Jamilla Mansoor, Licensed Practical Nurse

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1. WHY FOOT CARE MATTERS FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

If you're living with diabetes, your feet need special attention. Here's why:

High Blood Sugar Affects Your Feet in Two Major Ways:

Nerve Damage (Neuropathy)

- Reduced sensation means you might not feel cuts, blisters, or injuries
- Without pain signals, small problems can become serious infections

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- Neuropathy and peripheral arterial disease (poor circulation) are the two leading risk factors for diabetic foot complications (Canadian Institute for Health Information [CIHI], 2024)

Poor Circulation

- Reduced blood flow slows healing
- Minor wounds can take weeks or months to heal
- Infections are harder for your body to fight

The Statistics (Canada)

- Up to 34% of Canadians living with diabetes will develop a diabetic foot ulcer at some point in their lives (Blanchette et al., 2023)
- Up to 85% of diabetes-related leg amputations are considered preventable through timely detection and care (CIHI, 2024)
- About 80% of lower-extremity amputations related to diabetic foot disease can be prevented through screening, foot care, and footwear education (Blanchette et al., 2023)
- In Canada, only about half of people with diabetes receive the foot screening recommended for their risk level (Blanchette et al., 2023)

The Good News: With daily attention and regular professional care, you can keep your feet healthy for life.

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2. DAILY FOOT CARE ROUTINE

Follow these steps every single day to protect your feet:

MORNING ROUTINE

Step 1: Inspect Your Feet

- Check the tops, bottoms, sides, between toes, and heels
- Use a mirror or ask someone to help if you can't see clearly

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- Look for:
    - Cuts, scrapes, or puncture wounds
    - Blisters or red spots
    - Swelling or warmth
    - Dry, cracked skin
    - Ingrown toenails
    - Discoloration or bruising
    - Any changes from yesterday

Step 2: Wash Your Feet

- Use warm (NOT hot) water—test with your elbow or thermometer
- Use mild soap
- Wash gently but thoroughly
- **Dry completely, especially between toes** (moisture breeds infection)

Step 3: Moisturize

- Apply a good quality moisturizer to tops and bottoms
- **DO NOT apply between toes** (too much moisture can cause fungal infections)
- Avoid lotions with alcohol, which can dry skin

Step 4: Check Your Footwear

- Before putting on shoes, check inside for:
    - Pebbles or debris
    - Torn linings
    - Sharp edges or objects
- Feel inside with your hand—don't rely on sensation alone

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EVENING ROUTINE

Step 5: Inspect Again

- Check for any new injuries or changes that occurred during the day
- Look for pressure points or red areas from shoes

Step 6: Elevate Your Feet

- Sit with feet elevated for 10-15 minutes
- Promotes circulation and reduces swelling

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3. WARNING SIGNS YOU SHOULD NEVER IGNORE

Call a healthcare professional immediately if you notice:

🚨 **URGENT - Seek Care Within 24 Hours:**

- Any cut, blister, or wound (even if it doesn't hurt)
- Redness, warmth, or swelling
- Red streaks spreading from a wound
- Drainage or pus from any area
- Fever with foot pain or wound
- A wound that won't heal after 2-3 days
- Sudden color changes (blue, black, or very pale)
- Severe pain or throbbing

⚠️ **IMPORTANT - Schedule Professional Care:**

- Ingrown toenails
- Thick, discolored, or fungal nails
- Persistent dry, cracked skin

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- Calluses or corns
- Numbness or tingling (new or worsening)
- Loss of sensation
- Changes in foot shape
- Persistent foot odor

Remember: With diabetes, even small problems can become serious quickly. When in doubt, get it checked out.

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4. CHOOSING THE RIGHT FOOTWEAR

Your shoes are your first line of defense against foot injuries.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Proper Fit:

- Shop for shoes in the afternoon (feet swell during the day)
- Both feet should fit comfortably with wiggle room for toes
- No tight spots or pressure points
- Thumb's width of space between longest toe and shoe end

Supportive Features:

- Cushioned insoles
- Firm heel counter (back of shoe)
- Breathable materials (leather or canvas, not plastic)
- Low, wide heel (avoid high heels)
- Laces or velcro for adjustability
- Seamless interior (no rough stitching)

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Break-In Period:

- Wear new shoes for only 1-2 hours the first day
- Gradually increase wear time
- Check feet after each wear for red spots or blisters

WHAT TO AVOID:

❌ Flip-flops or sandals without back straps

❌ Pointed-toe shoes

❌ High heels over 2 inches

❌ Shoes with rough interior seams

❌ Walking barefoot (even at home)

❌ Shoes that are worn out or have holes

SOCKS MATTER TOO:

✅ Seamless or flat-seam socks

✅ Moisture-wicking materials

✅ Not too tight (no elastic marks on legs)

✅ Clean, dry socks daily (change more often if feet sweat)

✅ White or light-colored socks (easier to spot drainage)

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5. UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING INGROWN TOENAILS

What is an Ingrown Toenail?

An ingrown toenail occurs when the edge or corner of a toenail grows into the soft flesh surrounding it. This can cause pain, redness, swelling, and sometimes infection.

Important: If you have diabetes, poor circulation, or reduced sensation (neuropathy) in your feet, do not attempt to manage an ingrown toenail at home under any circumstances — even if it seems mild. See a foot care professional at the first sign of discomfort. The home-care guidance below applies only to people without diabetes, circulation problems, or nerve damage in their feet.

Home Care Tips for Mild Ingrown Toenails (people without diabetes, circulation issues, or neuropathy only)

Soak Your Foot

- Soak the affected foot in warm water for 15–20 minutes, 3–4 times daily
- This reduces swelling and relieves tenderness

Keep It Clean and Dry

- Gently dry your foot thoroughly after soaking
- Apply antibiotic ointment only if recommended by your healthcare provider
- Cover with a clean bandage

Wear Proper Footwear

- Choose shoes with a wide toe box that don't press on the toenail
- Avoid tight socks or stockings

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Avoid DIY "Bathroom Surgery"

- Never dig into the nail or cut down the sides yourself
- Do not use sharp objects to try to remove the ingrown portion
- This can lead to serious infection, and is especially dangerous for people with diabetes

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When to See a Foot Care Professional

Seek professional care immediately if you notice:

- Increased pain, redness, or swelling
- Pus or drainage from the area
- Red streaks extending from the toe
- Fever or chills
- You have diabetes, poor circulation, or nerve damage in your feet

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Why Foot Care Nurses Cut Nails at an Angle (When Needed)

You may have heard that toenails should always be cut straight across—and that's true for **prevention**. However, when a Licensed Practical Nurse or Advanced Foot Care Nurse treats an ingrown toenail with **slight discomfort or early symptoms**, they may use a specialized technique:

The Professional Angle-Cut Technique:

When there's already mild pressure or discomfort at the nail edge, foot care nurses are trained to:

1. **Assess the nail curvature** – Determine if the nail is curved (involuted) or pressing into the skin

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2. **Carefully trim at a slight angle** – This removes the problematic edge that's digging into the skin while preserving healthy nail structure
3. **Smooth and file the edge** – Ensures no sharp corners remain that could pierce the skin
4. **Apply professional treatment** – May use composite resin braces (like Onyfix or Bracenfix) to gently reshape the nail as it grows

Why This Works:

- Relieves immediate pressure and pain
- Prevents the nail from continuing to grow into the skin
- Allows the inflamed tissue to heal
- Guides future nail growth in the correct direction

Important: This technique should **only** be performed by trained professionals with sterile instruments. Attempting this at home can worsen the condition or cause infection.

Prevention: The Straight-Across Method

For healthy nails and long-term prevention, always:

✅ **Cut straight across** – Never round the corners or cut at an angle
✅ **Leave nails slightly longer** – The corners should lie just past the skin edge
✅ **Use proper nail clippers** – Not scissors
✅ **File smooth** – Gently file any sharp edges
✅ **Don't cut too short** – Nails should be level with the tip of your toe

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Advanced Treatment Options

Composite Nail Bracing (Bracenfix/Onyfix):

- Pain-free method using medical-grade resin
- Gently reshapes curved or ingrown nails over time
- Applied by Advanced Foot Care Nurses
- No needles, no surgery required
- Ideal for people who can't undergo traditional surgery (diabetics, those on blood thinners, pregnant individuals)

When Surgery May Be Needed:

- Severe, recurring ingrown toenails
- Infection that doesn't respond to conservative treatment
- Significant nail deformity

Your foot care nurse can refer you to a podiatrist or physician if surgical intervention is recommended.

Special Considerations for People with Diabetes

If you have diabetes:

- **Never** attempt home treatment for ingrown toenails
- See a foot care professional at the first sign of discomfort
- Check your feet daily for any changes
- Keep blood sugar levels well-controlled to promote healing
- Maintain regular foot care appointments every 6-8 weeks

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Remember: Your feet carry you through life. When it comes to ingrown toenails, professional care is always the safest choice—especially if you have diabetes or circulation concerns.

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6. WHEN TO SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

YOU NEED PROFESSIONAL FOOT CARE IF:

✓ You have diabetes, circulation issues, or neuropathy

✓ You have difficulty reaching your feet

✓ You have poor eyesight

✓ You have thickened or fungal toenails

✓ You have calluses, corns, or ingrown toenails

✓ You've had previous foot ulcers or infections

✓ You're on dialysis

✓ You have arthritis or mobility challenges

WHAT PROFESSIONAL FOOT CARE INCLUDES:

Clinical Assessment:

- Circulation checks
- Sensation testing
- Skin and nail examination
- Gait and pressure point analysis

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Treatment:

- Safe nail trimming and filing
- Callus and corn removal
- Ingrown toenail care
- Moisturizing and skin care
- Wound assessment and referral if needed

Education:

- Personalized foot care advice
- Footwear recommendations
- Prevention strategies

Continuity of Care:

- Electronic charting tracks your foot health over time
- Regular appointments every 6-8 weeks prevent problems

WHY CHOOSE A LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE?

- Nursing-level training in diabetic foot care and wound prevention
- Strict infection control protocols using sterilized equipment
- Clinical assessment skills to help catch problems early
- Many insurance plans cover nursing foot care — check with your provider for details
- Continuity of care with electronic health records

CLPNA-Regulated Practice:

Jamilla Mansoor is a Licensed Practical Nurse registered with the College of LPNs and HCAs of Alberta (CLHA) — the regulatory body for LPNs in Alberta, formerly known as the College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Alberta (CLPNA). Foot care activities involving cutting tissue or invasive procedures below the dermis — such as therapeutic nail debridement, corn or callus removal, and composite nail bracing — are restricted activities under Alberta's Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation and require Advanced Practice Foot Care authorization from the CLHA

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(College of LPNs and HCAs of Alberta, 2026). These services are provided only by LPNs who hold this specific advanced authorization and are delivered in accordance with CLHA standards of practice.

Professional foot care is preventive healthcare not a luxury.

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7. INSURANCE COVERAGE & RESOURCES

INSURANCE COVERAGE:

Many insurance plans cover professional nursing foot care, including:

- Private health insurance
- Extended health benefits
- Blue Cross
- Veterans Affairs Canada
- AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped)

How to Check Your Coverage:

1. Call your insurance provider
2. Ask: "Do you cover nursing foot care or diabetic foot care?"
3. Request details on coverage limits and requirements

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped)

- Alberta residents with severe disabilities
- With a doctors note, supporting letter then assessed by program maybe covered

Veterans Affairs Canada

- Veterans may be eligible for foot care coverage
- Contact VAC to confirm your benefits

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8. ABOUT SOLEFUL HARMONY

Professional Mobile Foot Care Delivered to Your Home

Soleful Harmony provides clinical-grade foot care services delivered by Licensed Practical Nurse Jamilla Mansoor. We specialize in helping people with diabetes, mobility challenges, and circulation issues maintain healthy feet through evidence-based practices and compassionate care.

WHY CHOOSE SOLEFUL HARMONY?

✓ **Licensed Practical Nurse** providing medical-level care

✓ **Mobile service**—we come to your home or facility

✓ **Professional-grade equipment** with strict sterilization protocols

✓ **Electronic charting** for continuity of care

✓ **AHS approved** business

✓ **Insurance coverage** accepted

✓ **Specialized programs** for Indigenous clients, AISH recipients, and Veterans

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Diabetic foot assessments
- Nail trimming and filing (including thickened/fungal nails)
- Callus and corn removal
- Ingrown toenail care
- Circulation and sensation checks
- Foot health education and preventative care planning

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CONTACT US:

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Book Your Appointment Today

Regular foot care every 6-8 weeks can prevent serious complications and keep you mobile and independent.

Daily Foot Care Checklist:

☐ Inspect feet (tops, bottoms, between toes)

☐ Wash with warm water and mild soap

☐ Dry completely, especially between toes

☐ Moisturize (avoid between toes)

☐ Check inside shoes before wearing

☐ Wear proper footwear and socks

☐ Elevate feet for 10-15 minutes

☐ Evening foot inspection

Monthly Professional Care:

☐ Schedule foot care appointment every 6-8 weeks

☐ Report any new concerns to your healthcare provider

☐ Review footwear for wear and tear

☐ Check insurance coverage and benefits

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TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Your feet carry you through life. Give them the care they deserve.

Book your professional foot care appointment with Soleful Harmony today.

📞 Call: (403) 966-4415
🌐 Visit: https://solefulharmony.ca
📧 Email: info@solefulharmony.ca

Serving clients throughout Calgary and surrounding areas with dignity, respect, and expert care.

Soleful Harmony | Licensed Practical Nurse | AHS Approved

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