

Orthopaedic Connection

The Diabetic Foot

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Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Diabetic foot problems are among the most difficult and challenging problems I treat. Care of a bad diabetic foot infection often involves

- Orthopaedic surgery for the surgical treatment
- Internal medicine for excellent diabetes management
- Wound care specialist for the best current wound management
- Infectious disease physician (internist) skilled in the treatment of these serious bacterial infections
- Orthotic specialist for the best custom supports and foot wear.

Foot problems that are minor for most people can become major if you have diabetes.

Neuropathy

One of the complications of diabetes is nervous system impairment termed neuropathy. Feeling in the feet is lost so you won't feel what others do. You may not feel an injury such as a cut, scratch, corn or blister.

Poor Circulation

Add to this the fact that most diabetics have poor circulation to their feet through the little blood vessels that are not working properly. This makes healing very slow.

Infection

Impaired circulation makes infection much more possible, because you need good small blood vessels to carry blood and antibiotics to the feet to fight infection. If circulation is poor, infection spreads more rapidly in people with diabetes.

Smoking

A lot of our diabetic patients with foot problems also smoke. Double jeopardy. Smoking (nicotine) decreases the blood supply to the feet.

Diabetic Foot Care

Diabetics need to take extra good care of their feet to avoid hospitalization and sometimes amputation.

Examine your feet every day so you can catch problems early. Sadly, hardly any of our patients do this. Inspect daily to discover

- Swelling
- Bruises
- Pressure areas
- Redness, warmth
- Blisters, scratches, cuts
- Punctures, corns, athletes foot
- Nail problems

Don't forget to look between the toes also.

Treatment

If you find anything wrong with your feet, no matter how slight, don't treat it yourself. See your doctor, soon!

Don't treat it yourself with drugstore medications.

Don't use any sharp instruments on your feet.

Do not put your feet in front of a fireplace or on a radiator as you may not feel when it is too hot.

Wear loose socks to bed.

More Good Advice

If you follow this advice you will save yourself a huge amount of problems.

- Don't go barefoot
- Don't wear sandals or flip flops
- Buy good, comfortable shoes
- Don't wear the same pair every day
- Put on clean, dry socks every day
- Wash your feet every day with mild soap and water
- Pat the feet dry, don't rub
- Apply lotion to keep feet soft and moist
- No cracked rough skin on heels or feet in general
- Very good nail care, yourself or by a professional

Diabetic foot problems are extremely common because these patients do not take care of themselves properly or do not get the proper care if they can't do it themselves.

If what I have outlined was followed, the complications I see would decrease tremendously.

There is hope for these patients, but only with proper care.

Office Website and Gratiot County Herald Archive

www.orthopodsurgeon.com and Your Orthopaedic Connection provide all the Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information you need! And you can reach the archive of all Gratiot County Herald previous articles which I have written through the office website.

All past articles are listed by title and the complete text is available at the click of a mouse.

All of the information available concerns what I treat daily in the office and hospital. Please log on and check it out.

I very much appreciate all of you loyal readers, patients and future patients.

Our goal is simple - To help people return to more pain free,
functional lives. I specialize in you.

Good health. Good life. All the best to you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush