

# Diabetic/Vascular Foot Wounds: Patient Oriented Education Tool

## How I Might Feel and What To Do

### Every Day!

- Wash your feet with warm water and mild soap (do not soak), dry carefully, especially between the toes, apply lotion to heels and soles, NOT between the toes
- Check your feet and toes daily with clean hands, use a mirror if unable to see your feet well
- Keep any cuts or scratches clean, dry and covered
- Trim toe nails straight across and NOT too short
- Wear clean, dry, well-fitting socks every day (white socks are best, they show drainage)
- Wear socks at night if your feet get cold, NO hot water bottles on your feet
- Always shake out your shoes before putting them on, in case there are objects in your shoes that you may not feel if you have decreased sensation to your feet
- Wear shoes even indoors, this protects your feet from stress and potential trauma

### TIPS

- Shop for shoes late in the day, when your feet are at their largest
- Ideal shoes will have: breathable fabric, firm heel, closed toe, rocker sole, low heel (< 1 inch), removable liners, round toe box, 1-2 cm beyond the longest toe while standing, and replace your shoes yearly. AVOID slip on shoes, pointed toe shoes and sandals
- Smoking decreases blood flow to your feet, so quitting or cutting back will help
- If you have Diabetes, keep your blood sugar less than 7
- Regular exercise, getting up and moving every 30 min can improve your circulation
- See a foot nurse or chiropodist if you have foot problems or deformities See a chiropodist or pedorthist for specialty shoes and/or orthotics (provide local services list)

### Green Zone: All Clear

This zone is your goal!

- Your feet are clean, dry and intact
- You have no pain, redness or deformities in your feet
- Sensation to your feet is intact
- Your blood sugar is less than 7

Your symptoms are under control. Go to all scheduled follow-up appointments and have your feet inspected by a medical professional at least yearly

### Yellow Zone: Caution

This zone is a warning!

- You have a cut, corn, blister or reddened spot on your feet or toes
- You have drainage on your socks
- You have pain and/or swelling in your feet
- You're feet are pale, cool

Call your Doctor/Nurse Practitioner/Chiropodist for instructions. You may need a foot assessment/diabetic foot screen/vascular assessment and possibly special footwear and wound care to prevent a wound

### Red Zone: Emergency

This zone means act fast!

- You have a visible wound on your foot or toes
- You have pain when you normally have decreased sensation to your feet
- You have redness, swelling, drainage, warmth, foul odor to your foot

Call your Doctor/ Nurse Practitioner **TODAY** to report symptoms and request an appointment, or present to your closest urgent care clinic, nursing station, or emergency department.

Clients and caregivers can make a self-referral to the program by calling toll free **833-346-5250** or **(807) 343-2431 ext. 2861**. (Monday - Friday 9:00 am - 5:00 pm est.)

# Changes in My Routine

## Foot checks

Daily foot and toe inspection will identify problems early.

Seek help as directed above.

## Footwear

Wearing well fitting, supportive shoes every day, even indoors!

## Exercise

Regular exercise can improve circulation, so keep moving. Exercise as directed by your health care team.

## Smoking

QUIT Smoking, even cutting back can improve blood flow to your feet.

## Flu Shot

Get one every year and ask about a pneumonia vaccine.

## Diet

Resume your balanced diet unless otherwise instructed by your Doctor or Registered Dietitian.

## Prevent Infection

Wash your hands often.

## Where to go for more Information

### Diabetes Canada

(Resources: blood sugar management, proper fitting footwear, foot care)

[www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

### Wounds Canada

[www.woundscanada.ca](http://www.woundscanada.ca)

### Diabetes Health Thunder Bay

(supports people living with prediabetes or diabetes)

Telephone 807-344-3422

Toll free (Ontario only) 1-800-489-3422

Email [contact.sjcg@tbh.net](mailto:contact.sjcg@tbh.net)

[www.sjcg.net](http://www.sjcg.net)

### Telehealth Ontario

(Medical Advice, Registered Dietician, Mental Health Concerns)

Telephone 1-866-797-0000

### Thunder Bay District Health Unit

(Covid-19 information, Immunizations, Help to quit smoking, Nutrition Promotion, Sexual Health)

[www.tbdhu.com](http://www.tbdhu.com)

Telephone 1-888-294-6630

### Flu Shot

[www.thunderbayflu.ca](http://www.thunderbayflu.ca)

Telephone 1-888-294-6630 or contact primary health care provider

### Want to have your say in how the Hospital cares for patients and families?

Sign up for a Patient Satisfaction Survey! Please contact 684-PFCC (7322) within 48 hours of discharge to submit your name to be randomly chosen to receive an email survey. The email address provided will only be used for this one visit and will not be shared with any third parties.

### Get involved and become a Patient Family Advisor (PFA)!

A PFA is a patient or care partner that has experienced care at the Hospital within the past two years, willing to share insights, ideas and experiences in ways others can learn and interested in improving care experiences for others.

### For more information:

Email: [PFCC@tbh.net](mailto:PFCC@tbh.net) or Telephone: (807) 684-7322

If you have questions about your care/treatment plan after discharge, or need support/assistance during your next visit to the Hospital please contact a Patient Advocate at 684-6211 or 629-3887.

