



For Immediate Release

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MANAGING DIABETES
National Diabetes Awareness Month: November

Lansing, Mich. – Diabetes affects an array of individuals in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) there are an estimated 30.3 million cases in the U.S with approximately 7.2 million individuals not aware they have the disease. For people with diabetes, the podiatrists of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) share that taking care of their feet is especially vital. More than 60 percent of all non-traumatic lower-limb amputations worldwide are related to complications from the disease, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Diabetes is the inability to manufacture or properly use insulin, impairing the body's ability to regulate sugar (glucose) levels which provide energy to cells and tissues throughout the body. Therefore, it is a disease that affects many parts of the body and is associated with serious complications such as: heart disease; stroke; blindness; kidney failure; and lower limb amputations. The leading cause of hospitalization among people with diabetes is foot ulcers and infections, but most of those problems are largely preventable.

“While it is extremely important for those with diabetes to receive regular foot exams by a podiatrist, keeping feet healthy to remain active can often prevent one from developing Type 2 diabetes,” says Jodie Sengstock, DPM, MPMA director of professional relations. “Our feet are our foundation. Keeping them healthy improves quality of life.”

While there is no cure for diabetes, there are many ways of managing it. With proper diet, exercise, medical care and careful management at home, serious complications can be avoided and a person with diabetes may enjoy a full and active life.

Managing and treating the disease requires a *team* of specialists to guide and treat persons with the disease. A person with diabetes should have the following specialists within their *Medical Neighborhood*: Primary Care Physician, Endocrinologist; Ophthalmologist; Dentist; Vascular Surgeon; and a Podiatrist.

Podiatrists are physicians and surgeons that are specially trained to treat foot conditions that can be caused by diabetes, such as: neuropathy, infection and ulcers.

While ulcers—open sores on the foot—are the most common diabetes-related foot problem, several others are also serious and prevalent, including neuropathy, skin changes, calluses, poor circulation, and infection. The nerve damage that diabetes causes may mean a person with an ulcer or injury may be unaware of it until it becomes infected. Infection can lead to partial or full amputation of the foot or lower leg. Regular care from a podiatrist can reduce amputation rates up to 80 percent, according to research of the American Podiatric Medical Association.

Persons with diabetes need to inspect their feet daily and be vigilant in looking for signs of ulcers, including irritation, redness, cracked or dry skin (especially around the heels), or drainage on their socks.

In addition to examining feet every day, follow these foot health tips:

- Discuss diabetes and the risks with family members. Diabetes can be hereditary, so talk to family members about monitoring blood sugar and foot health.
- Never go barefoot. Always protect feet with the proper footwear and make sure socks and shoes are comfortable and fit well.
- Trim toenails straight across, and never cut the cuticles. Seek immediate treatment for ingrown toenails, as they can lead to serious infection.
- Never try to remove calluses, corns or warts by yourself. Over-the-counter products can burn the skin and cause irreparable damage to the foot.
- Exercise. Walking can keep weight down and improve circulation. Be sure to wear appropriate athletic shoes.
- Keep feet elevated while sitting.
- Wear thick, soft socks. Avoid socks with seams, which can rub and cause blisters or other skin injuries.
- Have new shoes properly measured and fitted. Foot size and shape often changes over time. Shoes that fit properly should not rub or cause irritation.
- Wiggle toes and move feet and ankles up and down for five-minute sessions throughout the day.
- Visit an MPMA podiatrist regularly – at least two times per year - to avoid unnecessary complications.

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About the MPMA:

The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has been dedicated to serving and protecting the public's podiatric health and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members for over 100 years. The four main objectives of the organization are: to improve the quality of foot care; to promote the importance of foot health among the general public and health care professionals throughout the state; to increase awareness of the art and science of podiatric medicine and surgery; and to provide continuing medical education to podiatrists. www.mpma.org