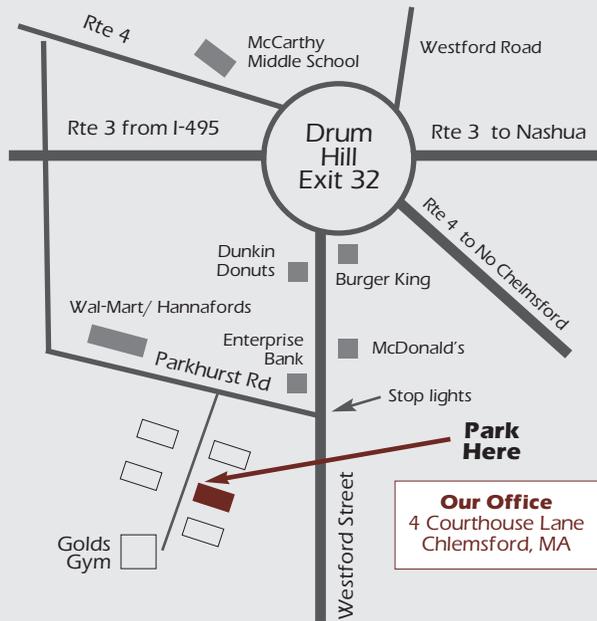


Chelmsford Office

978-441-9241
4 Courthouse Lane
(Behind Wal-Mart at Drum Hill)

New England Foot & Ankle, P.C. is located in the Courthouse office complex on Parkhurst Road behind Wal-Mart. Follow the signs to Gold's Gym. Our office is in the yellow building (the second building) on the left, just past the mailboxes.



Newburyport Office

978-463-0086
260 Merrimac Street
(Towle Office Bldg.)

New England Foot & Ankle, P.C. is located on Merrimac Street, approx 1/2 mile west from downtown Newburyport (towards Amesbury). Parking and entrance at rear of building. Follow the information sign in the courtyard to the appropriate building entrance.



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New England Foot & Ankle, P.C.

Diabetes and Your Feet... Why Should You Be Concerned?

Some Facts You Should Know.



Our Doctors are on staff at:

- Lowell General Hospital, Lowell
- Saints Medical Center, Lowell
- Anna Jaques Hospital, Newburyport
- Merrimack Valley Hospital, Haverhill

New Patients are welcome.
Please call for an appointment.

We accept most managed care plans and private insurances, Check, Cash and major credit cards



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Why Should You Be Concerned?

Patients with diabetes are more likely than others to have problems with their feet. The American Diabetes Association reports that the amputation rate is 10 times higher in persons with diabetes, but these rates can be decreased 45-85% with a comprehensive foot care program.

How Diabetes Can Affect the Feet

▪ **Diabetic neuropathy.** Because of the abnormal increase in blood sugar, nerves that supply sensation to the feet can be damaged. This decreases the feeling of pain in the feet, and you may not be able to feel if your shoe is rubbing against your toe. Or, the sensation of being able to feel a blister or a small crack in the skin between the toes or in the heel, may be lost. Ultimately, an untreated cut or sore could become infected, you may have to go to the hospital, and in very serious cases, have an amputation.

▪ **Diabetic vasculopathy.** Diabetes can affect the blood vessels of the feet, causing them to narrow, and reduce blood flow to the feet. A cold, pale foot may mean that the circulation to the foot is compromised, and the body's processes that normally fight infection will respond slower and often have trouble getting to the site of an infection.

▪ **Structural changes.** If the foot receives less nutrients and oxygen, the bones and joints will weaken, causing the foot to flatten or toes to curl, creating new pressure areas that could cause the skin to break down.

▪ **Other complications.** Kidney disease (nephropathy) affects the proteins that are involved in wound healing, and eye disease (retinopathy) makes it difficult to see the foot to check for problems.



Preventing Foot Problems

Controlling diabetes by managing the level of blood sugar helps to delay or prevent the foot problems associated with diabetes. In addition, diabetic patients should follow their doctor's advice on diet, exercise and medicine, and...

- Take daily care of their feet, such as washing them, trimming toenails, and inspecting them carefully for signs of injury and infection.
- Wear the proper footwear.
- Prevent injury to their feet
- Visit their healthcare provider regularly

Daily Foot Care

Diabetic patients should check their feet daily to help notice small problems before they become serious complications. The following are essential tips:

- Check your feet every day. Look between the toes. Check for any cracks, blisters, cuts, scratches, redness or swelling. You may need a hand mirror to look at the bottoms of your feet.
- Wash your feet every day with lukewarm (not hot) water and mild soap
- Dry your feet well, especially between the toes. Use a soft towel and pat gently, don't rub.
- Keep the skin of your feet smooth by applying a cream or lotion (but never between the toes). If the skin is cracked, talk to your podiatrist on how to treat it.

- Keep your feet dry by dusting them with a non-medicated powder before putting on shoes, socks or stockings.
- Call your nurse or doctor immediately if you have any signs of infection such as swelling, redness or drainage.

Regular Foot Care

- Don't treat calluses, corns or bunions with any over-the-counter products, or attempt shaving or cutting them with a razor blade.
- Cut toenails straight across to avoid ingrown nails. It might help to soak your feet in luke-warm water to soften them before attempting to cut them.
- Never cut skin at the end of your toes
- If you have trouble seeing, have someone help you trim your toenails. If your toenails are thick, you may need them trimmed by a podiatrist.

Preventing Injury To The Feet

Diabetics should take extra precautions to avoid injuries to their feet because they may not feel pain in their feet. Here are some tips:

- NEVER walk barefoot
- Check the inside of shoes before putting them on. Small objects, long toenails and torn linings in the shoe can create pressure points that could lead to irritation or infection.
- Be careful when your feet come into contact with hot objects. Burns may occur without your feeling them. Before washing your feet with warm water, check the water temperature with your hand or elbow.
- Avoid exposure to the sun on your feet without the protection of sunscreen lotion

Shoes and Socks

The right shoes and socks can protect your feet and keep them healthy by preventing corns, calluses and injuries. Here are some tips:

- Don't wear shoes without socks
- Avoid open-toed or open-heel shoes
- Don't wear uncomfortable or tight shoes that rub or cut into your feet. The toe end should allow all toes to wiggle
- Don't wear stretch socks, nylon socks, socks with an elastic band at the top, or socks with inside seams.
- Change socks and shoes every day. Have at least 2 pairs of shoes so you can switch pairs every other day.

Summary

Foot problems are a common complication of diabetes. Fortunately, they can be delayed or prevented through successful control of blood sugar levels and good foot care. For those diabetics under good control, a visit to the podiatrist twice a year for a foot check-up/screening is recommended. For a diabetic who has control issues or foot problems, more frequent check-ups with a podiatrist is a key factor in reducing risk. When something goes wrong, DON'T "wait a few days to see what happens". Early intervention may be the difference between a good and poor outcome.

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