

Neuropathic Ulcers

Diabetes is very difficult on your body's circulatory system. Over time, diabetes can cause enough damage that you begin to lose feeling in your hands and feet. When you can no longer feel sensation in these areas, you

Neuropathy occurs when there has been damage to the nerves outside of the central nervous system. The damaged nerves may cause numbness, tingling, keep you from feeling pain and can also cause muscle weakness.

A dangerous side effect of neuropathy is that you can cut your foot and not realize that your body is hurt. You might have a rock in your shoe and not realize you've been walking on it all day. You may stub a toe and have no idea that it is injured. If you are losing protective sensation in your feet, you are at a high risk to develop a wound or ulcer. Since neuropathic ulcers are common among diabetics, they are often called diabetic foot ulcers.



TREATMENT OF NEUROPATHY

Even though neuropathy is permanent, it does not have to keep you from living a full life! There may not be a cure for neuropathy but there are a few things you can do to lessen the effects:

- Maintain your ideal weight
- Exercise on a regular basis
- Monitor your blood sugar and keep it as close to normal as possible



ULCER PREVENTION

There are many things that you can do to prevent a neuropathic ulcer from occurring or re-occurring. Below, you will find preventative guidelines to promote good foot care

- Examine your feet daily. If you are unable to do this by yourself, ask a loved one to help you. Look for redness, blisters, calluses and sores. These are often the beginning signs of an ulcer.
- Where shoes both inside and outdoors. Try to avoid extreme temperatures when possible.
- Shake out shoes before wearing and smooth out the inserts.
- Wear loose fitting socks and avoid nylon hose unless you have been instructed to wear compression stockings.
- Trim your toenails straight across and smooth the corners with a nail file. Keep your feet away from heaters and open fires.
- Do not smoke as this can lower the amount of blood flow to your feet.

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to learn more about smoking cessation.

WOUND HEALTH

The main reason that neuropathy affects wound health is due to loss of sensation. If you cannot feel the pain of a wound you are not able to protect it. If you have a diabetic foot ulcer the

staff at the wound center may ask you to wear a special shoe or boot. These are referred to as offloading devices.

Your doctor can prescribe the best offloading device available but, if you don't put it on, it won't work. It is important that you wear the device whenever you walk, even if it is a short distance. Wearing your offloading device is a great way to manage and accept ownership of your care.

CONTACT

If you have any of these symptoms, call your wound treatment center right away.



- New or increased pain
- New redness, blisters or sores on your feet
- The redness around your wound is spreading
- Your wound begins to smell
- The drainage from your wound looks different or increases



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