

# Looking after a diabetic foot ulcer

Diabetes information and advice leaflet



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power in our  
communities

Your assessment has shown the presence of a diabetic foot ulcer. Some people with diabetes find their skin does not heal as well as it did and they are more likely to develop an ulcer or infection after a minor injury. An ulcer is an area of skin that has broken down and the tissue under it is now exposed. One in ten people with diabetes will develop a foot ulcer at some stage.

A foot ulcer can become infected and the infection may become severe. It is important to look after a foot ulcer to prevent infection occurring.

Good blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure levels, and regular foot assessment by a podiatrist will help to reduce future foot problems.

Smoking affects the circulation. This increases the chance of amputation. Seek advice to help quit.

Regular podiatry treatment is essential for your diabetic foot ulcer; the podiatrist will develop a treatment plan to meet your specific needs.

### **Podiatry treatment for your diabetic foot ulcer**

Diabetic foot ulcers are sometimes hidden beneath hard skin and can gather dead tissue around them.

The podiatrist will need to remove this to help healing. This can cause the ulcer to bleed and sometimes make it larger in size but this is completely normal.

### **How to look after diabetic foot ulcers**

The podiatrist will instruct you of the dressing regime and care, however please continue to check feet daily for any other problem areas.

### **Danger signs**

Pay close attention to any of the following on the feet:

- Is there any pain or throbbing?
- Does it feel hotter than usual?
- Are there any new areas of redness, inflammation or swelling?
- Is there any fluid leakage or increased amount of fluid leakage?
- Is there a smell?
- Do you have any flu-like symptoms?
- You may have red streaking and/or pain further up the leg which could indicate spreading infection that if not treated could result in sepsis or even death.

If an infection is severe, an amputation may be needed.

### **Do not get the dressing wet**

Getting the dressing wet prevents healing and allows bacteria to enter the ulcer, resulting in an infection. Ensure you moisturise all other areas of your feet you can access to prevent new wounds developing.

The podiatrist may give you a form to take to your GP to get a dressing protector on prescription. This protector will allow washing while keeping the dressing dry.

Do not stand or walk on the affected foot. Avoid any unnecessary standing or walking and rest as much as possible, keeping the foot up to help it to heal.

### **Rest is essential**

Sometimes a cast, a device to relieve pressure or a special shoe is required until the ulcer has healed. You may be given insoles or padding to help reduce pressure/friction to the ulcer site. It is important you wear these items every time you walk.

### **Podiatry appointments**

Always attend appointments to have the ulcer treated until the wound has healed and continue to follow advice or it will return.

### **Antibiotic treatment**

If there are signs of infection, antibiotics may be provided. If the infection is spreading, antibiotics will be given by the hospital straight into your blood stream to treat the infection quickly.

### **Operations**

When the circulation is reduced, an operation to increase blood supply to the ulcerated area may be needed. Sometimes, if an infection becomes severe, an operation is required to clean out the wound. If an infection is very severe, an amputation may be needed to save healthy parts of the foot/leg.

Podiatry Foot Protection Services  
Cantley Health Centre  
Middleham Road, Cantley  
Doncaster DN4 6ED  
Tel 03000 211 550

**Further information is available online:**

[www.rdash.nhs.uk/services/podiatry-foot-protection/](http://www.rdash.nhs.uk/services/podiatry-foot-protection/)  
[www.rcpod.org.uk](http://www.rcpod.org.uk)  
[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

If you would like this in large print, braille or on audiotape or would like this document in an alternative language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 0800 015 4334.

#### Amharic

ይህን ደብዳቤ በግልጽ እንዲታይዎ በትልቁ ብላፊል ተጽፎ ወይም በቲፕ ተቀድቶ ወይም በሌላ ቋንቋ ተጽፎ ለሦስት የሚፈልጉ ከሆነ የበሽታዎች ምክርና ግንኙነት አገልግሎትን በዚህ ቁጥር 0800 015 4334 ይውሰው ያንጋግሩ።

#### Arabic

إذا أردت الحصول على هذه الوثيقة بالخط الكبير أو بلغة برايل أو على هيئة شريط صوتي أو مترجمة إلى لغة بديلة فيرجى الاتصال بخدمة التنسيق ونصيحة المريض Patient Advice and Liaison Service على رقم الهاتف 0800 015 4334 .

#### Bengali

আপনি যদি এটা বড় অক্ষরের ছাপায়, ব্রেইল-এ, বা কানে শোনার টেইপ-এ পেতে চান অথবা আপনি যদি এই কাগজটা অন্য কোন ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে 0800 015 4334 নম্বরে পেশেন্ট এ্যাডভাইস এন্ড লিয়েজঁ সার্ভিসের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

#### Cantonese (traditional Chinese)

如果你希望本文件是采用大字印刷、盲文或录音磁带等格式，或者希望本文件是使用其它的语言，请联络病患建议与联络服务（Patient Advice and Liaison Service），电话号码：0800 015 4334。

#### Czech

Pokud byste chtěli dokument psaný většími písmeny, brailovým písmem nebo na zvukové kazetě nebo v jiném jazyku, prosím, kontaktujte poradenskou službu pacientům na tel. 0800 015 4334.

#### Farsi

در صورت تمایل به داشتن این سند به نسخه ای با چاپ درشت تر، به خط بریل یا نسخه صوتی، و یا به زبانی دیگر، لطفاً با دفتر خدمات مشاوره و هماهنگی بیماران به شماره تلفن ۰۸۰۰۰۱۵۴۳۳۴ تماس حاصل نمایند.

#### French

Si vous désirez ce document en gros caractères, en braille, enregistré sur cassette audio ou dans une autre langue, veuillez contacter le service de conseils et liaison des patients (Patients Advice and Liaison Service) au 0800 015 4334.

#### Kurdish Sorani

ئێمگەر ئێم زانیاریانە بە چاڵی گەورە، برائیل یان لەسەر شریتی دەنگی دهموازیت یاخود نەم بەلگەنامە بە دیکه زمانیکی تکیه دهموازیت، تکیه یهێوندی بکه به خزمەتگوزاری زینمایی و هاوئاهاهنگی نەمۆشەوه به ژماره 0800 015 4334.

#### Polish

Jeżeli dokument wymagany jest w wersji drukowanej dużą czcionką lub alfabetem Braille'a, na kasecie audio lub w innym języku, prosimy o kontakt z zespołem ds. kontaktów z pacjentami (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) pod numerem telefonu 0800 015 4334.

#### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਜਾਂ ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ ਚੱਲਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਸਮਝਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚੱਲਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਸਲਾਹ ਅਤੇ ਤਾਲ-ਮੇਲ ਸੇਵਾ (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) ਨਾਲ 0800 015 4334 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

#### Somali

Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad kan ku hesho far waaweyn, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la' ama cajalad dhegeysi ah ama haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in aad dukumeentigan ku hesho luqad kale, fadlan Adeegga Talobixinta iyo Xiriirinta ee Bukaanyeyda (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) kala soo xiriir lambarka 0800 015 4334.

#### Turkish

Bu belgeyi büyük yazı, braille (kör alfabesi) veya ses kaydı olarak veya başka bir dilde almak istiyorsanız, lütfen 0800 015 4334 no.lu telefondan Hasta Danışmanlık ve İrtibat Hizmetleri ile bağlantıya geçiniz.

#### Urdu

اگر آپ یہ بڑی چھپائی، بریل میں یا صوتی ٹیپ پر حاصل کرنا چاہیں یا یہ دستاویز کسی قابل زبان میں چاہیں تو براۓ کرم پیشینہ ایڈوائس اینڈ لیازن سروس سے 0800 015 4334 پر رابطہ کریں۔

#### Vietnamese

Nếu muốn có tài liệu này dưới dạng in chữ cỡ lớn hơn, chữ nổi braille hay bằng ghi âm, hoặc bằng một ngôn ngữ khác, xin quý vị liên hệ bộ phận Dịch vụ Tư vấn và Liên lạc với Bệnh nhân theo số 0800 015 4334.

This information is correct at the time of publishing  
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