

# PREVENTING

## SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS OF DIABETES.

**Like most people with type II diabetes, you know that uncontrolled glucose levels can lead to a variety of severe medical consequences. Two of the most serious problems involve the feet and the eyes. Your doctor has probably discussed this with you, but here are some helpful suggestions to make foot and eye care easier.**

### Watch your feet...

High blood glucose levels jeopardize healthy circulation, which can lead to a loss of feeling in the feet. This inability to feel pain or discomfort can mean that the foot may become severely infected before you notice that something is wrong. Sometimes these cases require amputation.

Prevention, early detection, and proper treatment are the best ways to minimize complications.

### A practical guide to diabetic foot care.

#### Do's

- Check your feet daily for blisters, cuts, and abrasions.
- Use a mirror to see the bottoms of your feet. Look between your toes. Check for dryness, redness, tenderness.

- Look inside your shoes every day for sharp edges, nail points, rough areas.
- Wash your feet every day and dry them well, especially between the toes.
- If your feet get cold at night, wear socks to bed.
- Cut your nails straight across.
- Use a thin layer of lubricating cream or oil if your feet are dry.

#### Don'ts

- Don't use tobacco.
- Avoid extreme water temperatures.
- Never rub creams or oils between your toes.
- Don't use hot water bottles or heating pads in bed.
- Avoid soaking your feet in hot water.
- Avoid using chemical agents to remove corns and calluses. Don't use corn plasters.
- Never cut corns and calluses.
- Avoid using strong antiseptic lotions on your feet. Never use adhesive tape on your feet.

### Vision problems are common among people with type II diabetes.

One of the most effective ways to prevent eye problems is frequent

evaluation. Diabetic retinopathy, a disease that damages the small blood vessels in the eye, strikes over 80% of diabetic patients within 15 years after diagnosis. The longer you've had diabetes and the higher your glucose levels, the more likely you are to develop retinopathy.

Unfortunately, you may not notice any problems with your eyesight until retinopathy has reached a fairly advanced phase. That's why periodic eye exams are essential for early diagnosis and proper treatment. Fortunately there are now effective treatments for retinopathy, including laser therapy.

### Face the facts about diabetic retinopathy.

Here are a few important things you should remember about retinopathy:

- Diabetic retinopathy can lead to blindness. See your doctor if you are having any vision problems at all.
- High blood glucose levels increase your chances of developing retinopathy. Be sure to stick with your treatment plan.
- If you have high blood pressure, be aware that it can make retinopathy worse. That's another reason to keep your blood pressure controlled.

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