



## Contact us

We're here to help. Get in touch by calling the Podiatry Team on 0117 919 0275 or to tell us about your service experience contact the service manager on the contact number above or request a 'Listening to you' leaflet.



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Alternatively you can feedback online at  
[bit.ly/TellustodayPod](http://bit.ly/TellustodayPod)

If you require this leaflet in another format or language, please contact us on [comms@briscomhealth.nhs.uk](mailto:comms@briscomhealth.nhs.uk) or ring 0117 900 2198 and we will be pleased to assist you.

For further information about services we provide please visit our website at [www.briscomhealth.org.uk/our-services](http://www.briscomhealth.org.uk/our-services)

# Looking after a foot ulcer from diabetes

## Patient guide



You have been given this leaflet because you have developed an ulcer on your foot due to diabetes



### What is a foot ulcer?

An ulcer is a break in the skin or a wound that is difficult to heal. They can occur anywhere on the foot as a result of any minor skin injury and are very prone to infections.

About one in ten people who have diabetes will develop a foot ulcer at some stage in their lifetime.

Most ulcerations heal without complications however they can be severe and in a small number of cases lead to surgery and amputation. Therefore it is important to discuss and follow the medical advice agreed during your clinical appointments.



## Advice on looking after your ulcer

An ulcer may develop dead tissue and hard skin that either covers the wound entirely or surrounds it at the edges. A podiatrist may decide to remove this with a scalpel (a process known as debridement) to completely expose the wound and to be able to fully examine it and reduce the risk of infection from the dead tissue. This treatment may result in the wound appearing larger. It is generally a painless procedure and can be carried out at your local health centre or clinic.

- If the dead tissue is not removed the ulcer is likely to take longer to heal and this will increase the risk of infections occurring.
- A dressing will be carefully chosen and applied to the ulcer to keep the area clean and at a constant temperature to encourage healing.
- **It is important to keep your dressing clean and dry.** Getting the dressing wet may prevent healing or allow bacteria to enter the ulcer causing infection.
- **Unless you have very poor circulation, your foot should be elevated and RESTED** (not walked on) for the majority of the day. Walking on an ulcerated foot will slow the healing process and make the ulcer much worse.
- You may be given a temporary shoe, insole or boot from the podiatrist to help reduce the pressure on your ulcer. You should follow the advice given to you when the footwear is issued and should wear it whenever you are weight-bearing, even at home.
- **Smoking directly reduces the circulation to the feet and will slow the ulcer healing.** You should speak to your GP if you would like help to stop smoking.
- You should aim to control your diabetes as best as you can. Aim for a blood glucose before meals between 4-5 mmols to create the best environment for healing. Ask for advice from your diabetes team if you have difficulty reaching this target.



## Infection

You should pay close attention to any of these danger signs when checking your feet as they may indicate infection that requires antibiotics or a change in antibiotics if you are already taking them:

- **Swelling - has your shoe become tighter recently?**
- **Colour change - is there any reddening of the skin around the ulcer site or dressing? Are there any bluish marks like bruising or is the skin going black?**
- **Heat - does your foot feel warmer than usual or compared to the other foot?**
- **Is there discharge or pus - has your ulcer become wet where it was dry before? Is there more blood or pus discharging from it?**
- **Have you developed new ulcers or blisters?**
- **Has your ulcer become painful or uncomfortable or is your foot throbbing?**
- **Does it smell - is there a new, unpleasant smell from your foot?**
- **Do you feel unwell with fever or flu-like symptoms?**
- **Are your blood sugars raised for no obvious reason?**

**If the answer to any of these questions is 'yes', contact your GP or Podiatrist immediately - do not wait until your next appointment.**



Individual advice:

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Date next appointment is due: .....

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