

FOOT NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SPRINGFIELD PODIATRY AND ACCURATE FOOT & DIABETIC CARE

November, 2021 Edition

NOVEMBER IS DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

As podiatrists, we see many patients with diabetes. In 2019, there was an estimated 463 million adults worldwide with diabetes, and by 2045, this number is projected to reach 700 million. Most diabetics (~90%) are Type 2, and approximately 1.1 million children and adolescents have Type 1 diabetes. What makes diabetes so challenging is that it affects every organ system in the body, slowly causing damage to the tissues over the years until a “tipping point” is reached and people start to develop symptoms. These symptoms may include dry mouth and increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, poor vision, recurring infections of the skin, slow healing wounds and tingling or numbness in the hands and feet. Diabetics have an increased risk of clogging of the arteries which can lead to heart attacks, strokes and kidney failure.

Diabetes affects the feet in several ways that can lead to serious problems. For example, as mentioned above, diabetes accelerates clogging of the arteries which contributes to poor wound healing and the inability to fight off infections. It also reduces wound healing with its negative impact on the smallest blood vessels, the capillaries, by blocking the transfer of oxygen and nutrients from getting out of the blood stream and into the cells. Likewise, waste products from the cells cannot be adequately removed by the bloodstream.

Over time, high blood sugar levels (hyperglycemia) damage the peripheral nerves in the feet and toes, leading to such symptoms as burning, pins and needles, electrical sensations, cold feet and numbness. Typically, the painful sensations of neuropathy are greatest at bedtime, making a good night’s sleep difficult. Moreover, when sensation is compromised, cuts and open sores go unnoticed,

and infections can quickly develop. In the extreme cases, this may lead to hospitalization and amputation.

In addition to damage to the sensory nerves, the small motor nerves in the hands and feet can be compromised with diabetes. We often see weakening of the small muscles that stabilize the toes causing curling of the digits (hammertoes and clawtoes). This frequently leads to painful corns and calluses that make it difficult to wear shoes comfortably and increase the risk of open sores in the feet and toes. Other deformities like bunions and bunionettes may develop in the feet as well.

Many skin changes can occur with diabetes, including discoloration, thinning of the skin, patches of thickened skin, blisters, skin infections, open wounds and sores, depressions in the skin, raised bumps, dry, itchy skin, skin tags and yellow scaly patches around the eyelids.

So, you may now be asking yourself, “What can I do to prevent these terrible complications of diabetes?” As I tell many of my diabetic patients, if you do not control your diabetes, it will control you. Here are some basic steps (pun intended) towards that goal.

First and foremost, **CONTROL YOUR BLOOD SUGAR!** This is not always easy to do, but it is an absolute necessity. Eat a healthy diet low in sugars, simple carbohydrates and saturated fats. Avoid alcohol and smoking. Exercise regularly. Take your medications as prescribed and monitor your blood sugars to work with your physician to properly manage your diabetes as well as other conditions such as your blood pressure.

In order to reduce the risk of foot problems associated with diabetes, preventative care is essential. Inspect your feet daily, including between the toes and the soles and heels. Look for cuts, sores, cracks or blisters and treat them immediately. Wash the feet carefully and dry between the toes. Use emollient creams daily but avoid creams or ointments between the toes where moisture can accumulate. Check your shoes for proper fit and make sure there are no foreign items in the shoes, ripped linings, break down, etc. Avoid barefoot

walking or just wearing socks as you may injure your feet even in your home. If you have any suspected problems, call our office as soon as possible for an evaluation. With proper care and maintenance, people with diabetes can live a full and active life if they carefully control this insidious disease so that it does not control them!

ANNOUNCEMENT

Our annual Shoe Drive starts in November and runs through March 31, 2020. Please drop off your new or gently used shoes, boots, sandals and slippers to either office to help those in need. Thank you for your continued support!

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

We would like to welcome our newest team member, Michelle, to our practice! Michelle is a Certified Medical Assistant who joined us September 27th. For now, she will primarily be working in the West Chester office. A Broomall native, Michelle enjoys spending time with family and friends, creating art projects and exercising. She is very happy to be working with us and helping to care for our patients. We have found her to be very friendly, outgoing and enthusiastic. Michelle looks forward to meeting you on your next visit!

MYTH BUSTERS

Eating sugar causes diabetes. Not true. Eating sugar does not directly cause diabetes, but a diet high in refined sugars can lead to overweight and obesity, which are risk factors for diabetes.

FUN FACTS

Diabetes during pregnancy is called gestational diabetes. While it usually goes away after the baby is born, these mothers are at risk of developing gestational diabetes with future pregnancies and Type 2 diabetes later in life.

WHAT'S NEW

There are prescription supplements available to improve the symptoms of neuropathy, such as Metanx, PoDiaPN and Neuravite. These pharmaceutical grade vitamins can help to improve nerve function and regrow nerve endings in the feet! If you suffer from neuropathy, whether from diabetes or other causes, ask us about this safe and effective option.

QUOTES

November is the month to remind us to be thankful for the many positive things happening in our life.

PUNNY STUFF

The police arrested the Thanksgiving turkey. They suspected foul play.

PUZZLE:

Call today for your foot health evaluation!

In Drexel Hill, call 484-459-5954

(springfieldpodiatry@springpod.comcastbiz.net)

In West Chester, call 610-436-5883

(accpodiatry@gmail.com)

Or visit us at www.drsiegerman.com

Dr. Julie Siegerman and Dr. Siavash Rostami

Follow us on Instagram @springfield.podiatry