

FOOTPRINTS

An Informational Newsletter for Patients of APMA Member Podiatrists

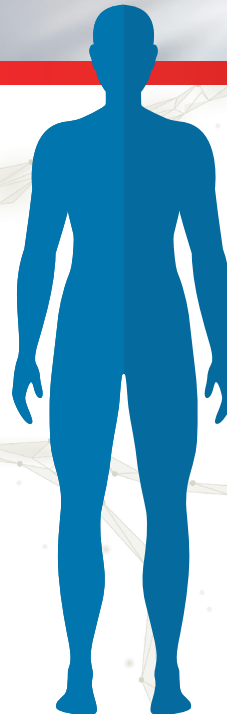
November 2023 | Fall Edition

DIABETES DOESN'T HAVE TO HURT

Diabetic peripheral neuropathy is pain or loss of sensation as a result of nerve damage caused by diabetes. Blood sugar levels that get too high or too low damage the nerves that lead to the feet and prevent them from functioning properly. The resulting burning, tingling, or heaviness may range from uncomfortable to intensely painful.

Peripheral neuropathy usually begins in your toes but can progress up the foot, putting you at risk for serious consequences. Those who lose sensation altogether may not notice an injury or a sore, which could lead to a serious infection. These infections can result in amputation and even death. Numbness can also lead to balance problems or cause a fall.

APMA's member podiatrists want patients to know that people with diabetes should see a podiatrist at the first sign of foot pain. "Patients often find a podiatrist after a frustrating journey that includes multiple health-care providers," said William McCann, DPM, a podiatric physician and surgeon and a member of APMA's Communications Committee. "Diabetes doesn't have to hurt when you start with your podiatrist. Podiatrists are expertly trained in treating the foot and ankle."



"Diabetes doesn't have to hurt when you start with your podiatrist. Podiatrists are expertly trained in treating the foot and ankle."

FOOTPRINTS

TREATMENT OPTIONS BRING HOPE

Once your podiatrist diagnoses diabetic peripheral neuropathy, they can discuss options and work with other members of your diabetes care team to ensure you get the highest-quality treatment.

Podiatrists want patients to know that a diabetes diagnosis is not a life sentence to pain. “Neuropathy is a common occurrence that affects many people with diabetes,” said Timothy Miller, DPM, a podiatric physician and surgeon and member of APMA’s Communications Committee. “It can be debilitating. Many symptoms occur at night and affect sleep. But there are options to address these symptoms,” Dr. Miller said.

“Years ago, patients who suffered from painful diabetic neuropathy had minimal options,” said Alex Kor, DPM, a podiatric physician and surgeon and member of APMA’s Communications Committee. “In the last five to seven years, there are more and more options.”

“Your podiatrist can prescribe nerve medications, orthotics, and added-depth shoes, and even perform nerve surgery when indicated,” said Dr. McCann. Oral medications, pain patches, and devices such as spinal nerve stimulators can make a huge difference in painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy.



Dr. Kor is a podiatric physician and surgeon in practice in Carmel, IN.



Dr. McCann is a podiatric physician and surgeon in practice in Concord, NH.



Dr. Miller is a podiatric physician and surgeon in practice in Orlando, FL.



TAKE CONTROL

Patients can help take control of their diabetes and their painful peripheral neuropathy by lowering their A1C.

“Symptoms of peripheral neuropathy will likely get worse if you do not help to lower your blood glucose,” said Dr. Miller. “Lowering and controlling your blood sugar is one of the key factors that can lead to reduced symptoms.”

Work with your diabetes care team to incorporate a healthy diet and exercise into your daily habits. Not only will well-controlled blood sugar help to prevent or slow the progression of neuropathy, but it will also help wounds or ulcers on the feet to heal more quickly if they occur, helping to avoid the risk of infection and amputation.



To learn more about diabetes and your feet and the options for treating painful diabetic peripheral neuropathy, visit www.apma.org/diabetes.

Doctors of podiatric medicine are podiatric physicians and surgeons. They are also known as podiatrists, and are qualified by their education, training, and experience to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and related structures of the leg.



9312 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, MD 20814-1621
www.apma.org