



How Diabetes can affect your feet

Colin McGreal – Type 1 Patient

So, when I first had diabetes, my life changed. But when I realized that my Achilles heel was my feet, I then had to realize that I had to discuss it with the professionals.

When you realize the consequences of exposing your feet to a professional who will then get a little spike and they will touch the end of your feet, you almost want to feel that spike even though you can't. And I learned more and more when I went in for my diabetic checks that I was potentially losing more and more feeling and I didn't want to do that. So you'd almost think about saying, yeah, it can feel that, yeah, I can feel that and you really can't. They know it. They know when they're not pricking your toe.

Sarah Ayles – Diabetes Specialist Podiatrist

People with diabetes can develop problems with their circulation and also can develop nerve damage to their feet. This can result in developing wounds that you may not notice as quickly as you may have done before, and subsequently infections can develop quite quickly.

Colin McGreal – Type 1 Patient

Unfortunately, of late, I had an incident with my foot because of my business.

And on this occasion there was a tack that I walked upon and in so doing, because of my foot not really feeling as anybody else's may, I walked around on it for at least a day and it wiggled itself in and out and in and out of my foot. So the doctor gave me a five day appointment, in five days time. In which time, I just dealt with the injury myself with putting medication on it and on the fifth day went to doctors and at which time the swelling and the infection was too bad. It was really bad. That was the first time ever I was concerned and really worried and I was rushed to hospital and the podiatry service took over again and they dealt with it in a superb way and fully recovered from it.

Sarah Ayles – Diabetes Specialist Podiatrist

So if you ever notice that you have any wounds to your feet or any areas that are red, hot, swollen, or painful, particularly if you don't normally feel pain, these are all a sign that you may have a serious foot complication. If that is the case, it is really important that you seek help that same day. This may be through seeing your GP, your practice nurse, your district nurse, the podiatry service themselves, or if it is the weekend or out of hours by phoning 111, attend the minor injuries unit or A&E. If you have any of those symptoms, but you also begin to feel incredibly unwell, with flu like symptoms, and you may notice that your blood sugars are rising, this is a sign



that you may have a very serious infection and therefore it would be important that you attended A&E that same day.

Gloria Travers – Type 2 Patient

I have had problems with my feet right from the word go, but when my husband was alive, he used to examine my feet all the time. However, about 10 years ago, we went on holiday. We drove to Holland to go to a wedding and then we looked at my feet. They were fine. We left the next day to drive to France and in that short time, my toe was really, really throbbing. Although I can't feel it, that's what you've got to be careful about. You know, you're not going to feel it, so you need to check them all the time.

As soon as I got home, I had an appointment the next day to go to see Rakhi and it was really, and truly, you know, she said straight away we need to do something. They put me on antibiotics, but it was too far gone. And then what you have to think about, what they keep saying to you is eventually it will drop off and that is really worrying.

Sarah Ayles – Diabetes Specialist Podiatrist

So there are a few factors that can increase your risk of developing problems if you have diabetes. The first one is if your blood sugar control is unstable, ie, you may have sugars that are too high or too low, as this can increase the risk of your blood supply getting damaged and the damage to your nerve endings also. If you get an infection and your blood sugars are high, the bacteria feeds off this infection, meaning the antibiotics are not as effective as they would be if your sugars were of a more stable level.

Colin McGreal – Type 1 Patient

I'm 61. I like to think I'm fairly healthy but I have issues because I've not dealt with my diabetes in the right way, at the right time. I could be worse than I am and there are people worse than I am but there is a solution to it. And, I'm not as bad as I could have been because I've learned to ask the questions and to think about what I'm doing.

