



Preventing Limb Loss in People with

Diabetes



by NLLIC Staff

Revised 2004

Diabetes is the leading cause of foot and leg amputations. If you have diabetes, your risk for amputation is higher if you:

- Are age 65 or older
- Are African American
- Have already had an amputation
- Have a loss of feeling in your feet or legs (This is called neuropathy.)
- Have poor circulation in your feet and legs.

Foot and leg sores (ulcers) heal slowly in people with diabetes. If left untreated, ulcers can often lead to amputation. Prevention begins with:

- Daily foot inspections (Look for redness, cracks in skin, or sores.)
- Daily foot care (Dry completely between your toes and use lotion to keep skin moist.)
- Regular visits to your physician and podiatrist
- Foot-care education
- Wearing proper shoes at all times (Do not go barefoot.)
- Early treatment of any trouble areas.

People with diabetes should have a foot exam every year. Exams include:

- Checking for sensation (feeling) in the feet
- Looking at the foot for changes in shape and size
- Checking blood flow and circulation
- Looking for discoloration.

For more information:

- American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org
- *Feet Can Last a Lifetime* printable brochure is available at www.diabetic.com/education/feet/feet.htm