

# Diabetic neuropathy



## What is a neuropathy?



“Neuropathy” is what doctors call damage to the nerves. With our nerves we perceive external influences such as touch, heat, cold or pain. If the nerves are damaged, this perception is disturbed.

## Increased blood sugar damages nerves



In case of diabetes mellitus there is too much sugar in the blood. This excess of sugar can damage the nerves. Therefore, approximately one in three people with diabetes is affected by neuropathy.

## Possible complaints



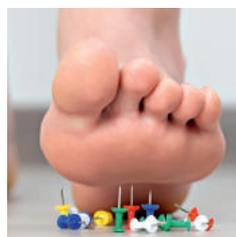
The long nerve fibers that reach down to the feet are particularly sensitive. Therefore, neuropathy usually manifests itself first in the feet through sensory disturbances such as tingling (formication), burning or stabbing pain.

## Disturbed sleep



Especially at rest and at night, neuropathic symptoms often worsen. Many affected people therefore have trouble with sleeping.

## Dangerous: loss of sensation



Nerve damage does not always lead to noticeable complaints. The sensitivity of the feet often decreases unnoticed. As a result, the feeling for pressure, temperatures and “real” pain, e.g. due to injuries, is slowly lost. As a result, wounds are often discovered too late and become inflamed.

## Feared consequence: amputation



In patients with diabetic neuropathy, inflamed, poorly healing wounds on the feet can lead to “diabetic foot problems” – a feared complication. In such cases, amputation of the affected foot or leg region is often the only way out.

## Therefore, especially for people with diabetes: Listen to your feet!

**Diabetes!**  
Hören  
Sie auf Ihre  
Füße?

Talk to your doctor if you notice anything unusual at your feet.

If you take early precautions and protect your nerves and feet, you can avoid serious complications! Tips for daily foot care can be found on the back and on:

[www.hoerensieaufihrefuesse.de](http://www.hoerensieaufihrefuesse.de)

# Foot care tips for people with diabetes

## Tip 1: The daily self control of the feet



- Do you see any pressure marks, cracks or fissures?
- Inform your doctor of any abnormalities.

## Tip 2: Foot check by physician



- Have your feet examined at least once a year.
- By means of painless tests, your doctor can detect nerve damage early on.

## Tip 3: Regular foot bath – but properly



- Maximum 3 times per week
- Maximum 3 minutes per bath
- With lukewarm water (30 to 37 °C)
- Afterwards: Dry feet thoroughly!

## Tip 4: Special skin care after the bath



- Gently (!) rub off the still moist horny skin with a pumice stone.
- Care for the feet with an urea-containing ointment.

## Tip 5: Caution during pedicure



- Avoid scissors, nail clippers or sharp nail files.
- A rounded nail file made of sandpaper is more suitable.
- In case of neuropathy, regular medical foot care is recommended.

## Tip 6: Never walk barefoot



- Walking barefoot can cause slight injuries that are not noticed because of the neuropathy.
- Protect your feet from the sun during the summer so that they do not burn unnoticed.

## Tip 7: Caution: Hot water bottles and heated pads



- Hot water bottles or heated pads that are too hot can lead to unnoticed burns.

## Tip 8: Foot gymnastics



- Foot gymnastics improves the blood circulation, the mobility and the muscular system of the feet.

## Tip 9: Keep your eyes open when buying shoes!



- Use the removed insole to check whether the shoe is sufficiently wide.
- Look and feel if there are any disturbing seams or bumps in the shoe.
- Avoid high heels.

## Tip 10: Daily fresh cotton socks



- Wear cotton socks without seams, without darned holes or constricting cuffs.
- Change them daily.
- Make sure that no pressing folds are formed.