



## Self-Care for Diabetes

When you have diabetes, you need to take special care of your body. The tips below can help you stay healthy and prevent problems. Be sure to have regular checkups, too.

### Caring for Your Feet

Sores on your feet can become problems quickly. To keep your feet healthy:

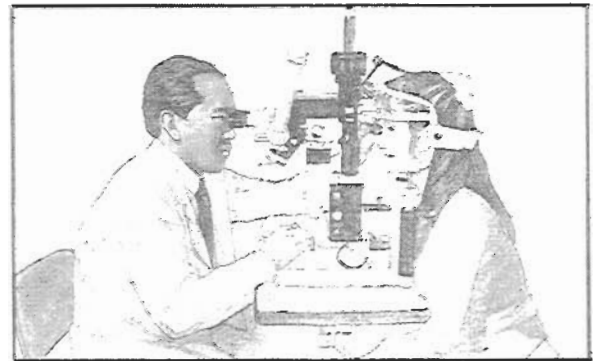
- Wash your feet daily. Dry them well. *Don't* soak them.
- Check your feet each day for sores, blisters, cracks, redness, or swelling. Use a mirror to help you.
- Cover sores, blisters, cracks, and red spots with a bandage. Call your health care provider if they don't heal in a few days.
- File your toenails straight across. *Don't* cut them yourself unless your health care provider says it's all right and has shown you what to do.



### Caring for Your Eyes

High blood sugar can cause problems with your eyes. This can happen even if you don't notice a change in your vision. To keep your eyes healthy:

- See your eye doctor for a checkup once a year, or as often as he or she suggests.
- Call your eye doctor if you see dark spots, have eye pain or pressure, or see poorly in dim light.



### Caring for Your Skin

Diabetes can make you more likely to get skin infections. To keep your skin healthy:

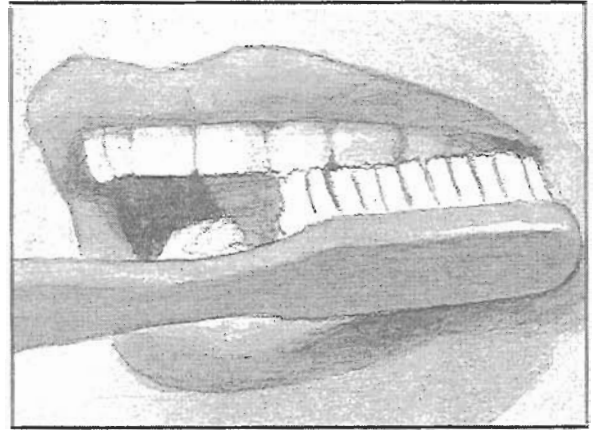
- Bathe each day. Use warm (*not* hot) water. Dry yourself well. Then apply a lanolin-based skin lotion to prevent dryness.
- Wash a cut with warm, soapy water. Pat it dry. Then cover it with a bandage. Call your health care provider if it doesn't heal in a few days.



## Caring for Your Mouth

Gum disease and other mouth problems are more common in people with diabetes. To help prevent these problems:

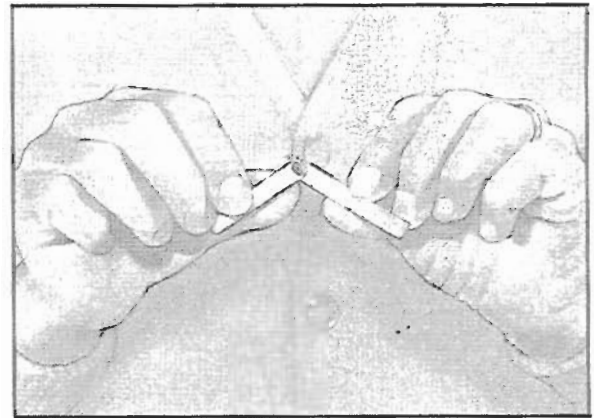
- Brush your teeth with toothpaste after every meal. Use a soft toothbrush.
- Floss at least once a day.
- See your dentist every 3 to 6 months, or as often as he or she suggests.
- Call your dentist if you have a sore in your mouth.



## What About Smoking?

Smoking slows your blood flow. It also raises your blood pressure. This can harm blood vessels in your eyes, heart, and kidneys.

- If you smoke, quit.
- Ask your health care team about programs to help you stop smoking. Ask your family and friends to give you support.
- Even if you don't smoke, try to avoid smoke from other people's cigarettes, pipes, or cigars.



## Special Instructions:

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