

Useful Website: www.diabetes.org.uk

General Information:

- ⇒ If your condition does not improve or gets worse, please contact the surgery during opening hours on 01948 860205.
- ⇒ If you require information or advice which is non-urgent, you can telephone NHS Direct, a 24 hour advice line, on 0845 46 47.
- ⇒ **OUT-OF-HOURS COVER:** Medical advice is always available for emergencies at night, weekends and all bank holidays. If you require advice urgently, please call 01948 860205. The recorded message will give you the number to call for the GP Out of Hours Service.
- ⇒ **EMERGENCIES:** In the event of a serious problem, such as chest pain or collapse, call 999 immediately.

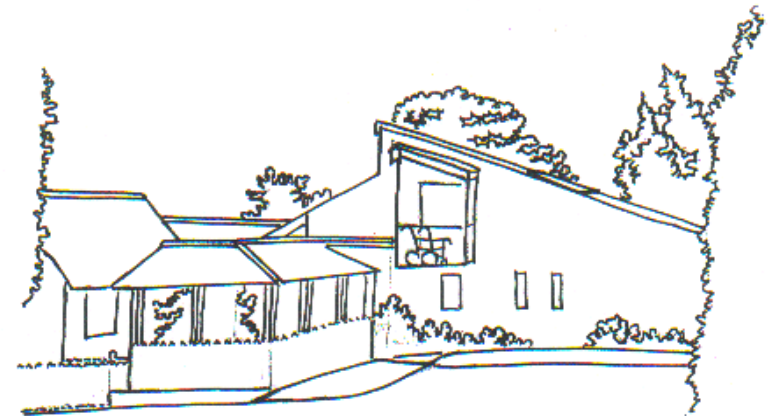


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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS
DIABETIC
PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY
LAUREL BANK SURGERY
MALPAS, CHESHIRE SY14 8PS



Look After Your Feet!



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DIABETIC PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

WHAT IS IT? Peripheral Neuropathy is a potential complication of diabetes. It is a nerve disorder that affects the feet and legs and, less often, the hands. The damage to the nerves leads to numbness, pain and weakness.

WHO GETS IT? It can affect all diabetics. The longer you have diabetes the more likely you are to get it.

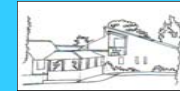
WHY DOES IT HAPPEN? High sugar levels and high cholesterol levels and raised blood pressure lead to narrowing of the tiny blood vessels in the toes which reduces the blood flow and therefore the oxygen supply to the nerves in the toes. This can be further exacerbated by smoking and high alcohol intake.

SYMPTOMS Numbness, tingling, burning, pain, cramps, wasting of muscles in the feet or hands: Neuropathy develops slowly over a number of years so it may not be noticed to start with.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE GOT IT? The first signs may be numbness and tingling which may develop into pains and cramps. You may get an infection in your foot - this will be red, hot and swollen but may not be painful because of the loss of sensation.

HOW TO PREVENT IT? It cannot be prevented. Its onset can be delayed if you keep blood sugars, blood pressure and cholesterol low by eating well and exercising regularly.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT? The first step is to make sure your blood glucose, cholesterol and blood pressure are under control. It then depends on your particular symptoms. The doctor may suggest Aspirin or Ibuprofen, creams to apply or other medications if very severe.



FOOT CARE

- ◆ Clean your feet daily using warm water and a mild soap. Avoid soaking your feet. Dry them with a soft towel: dry carefully between your toes.
- ◆ Keep your feet warm and inspect your feet and toes every day for foreign bodies (i.e. splinters, drawing pins etc), cuts, blisters, redness, swelling, calluses or other problems. Use a mirror (laying a mirror on the floor works well) or get help from someone else if you cannot see the bottoms of your feet.
- ◆ Moisturize your feet with lotion, but avoid getting it between your toes. Hard, dry skin can crack and let germs in.
- ◆ After a bath or shower, file corns and calluses gently with a pumice stone.
- ◆ Each week (or when needed) cut your toenails to the shape of your toes and file the edges with an emery board. Take care not to cut the skin around your toes - if you do, watch out for infections.
- ◆ Always wear shoes or slippers to protect your feet from injuries. Prevent skin irritation by wearing thick, soft, seamless socks. Numb feet won't feel shoes that are too tight and pressure blisters can occur.
- ◆ Wear shoes that fit well to allow your toes to move. Break in new shoes by wearing them for only an hour at a time at first.
- ◆ Before putting your shoes on, look them over carefully and feel the insides with your hand to make sure they have no tears, sharp edges or objects in them that might injure your feet.
- ◆ Attend the Chiropodist regularly to keep your feet healthy and the Practice Nurse twice a year for routine check-ups which will include neuropathy checks.