

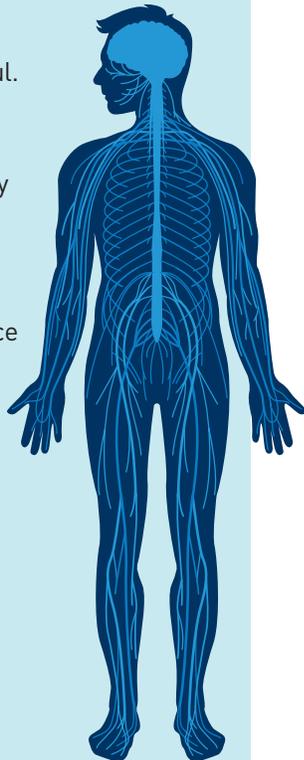
DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE TO DIABETES



More than 30 million Americans are living with diabetes. Up to 70 percent will develop diabetic **peripheral neuropathy**—or nerve damage—in their feet, causing burning, tingling, or numbness that can dramatically affect their quality of life and lead to other serious complications.

Nerve damage is caused by blood sugar levels that get too high or too low, poisoning the nerves that lead to the feet and preventing them from functioning properly. The resulting burning and tingling may be intensely painful. Those who lose sensation altogether may not notice an injury or sore, which could lead to a serious infection. Numbness can also lead to balance problems or cause a fall.

Unfortunately, once nerve damage occurs, it is often permanent. Your podiatrist may be able to help ease some symptoms, but **prevention** is the best cure!



HERE ARE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE SO YOU DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE TO DIABETES!



Carefully manage your blood sugar in conjunction with your diabetes care team. Well-regulated blood sugar will help protect your nerves from damage.



Increase your physical activity. Exercise can help keep your weight down and improve circulation. Try walking for 15–30 minutes on a daily basis.



See a podiatrist regularly. A podiatrist is a surgeon and specialist with advanced training in the foot and ankle. Your podiatrist is a critical member of your diabetes care team and can help you prevent diabetic nerve damage.

IF YOU DO BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE TINGLING, BURNING, NUMBNESS, OR EVEN FATIGUE IN YOUR FEET:



See a podiatrist right away. Numbness is never normal, and your podiatrist can diagnose nerve damage as well as other problems that may cause loss of sensation. Your podiatrist can also help you manage the symptoms of nerve damage.



Protect your feet. People with nerve damage may not notice injuries, so going barefoot is not recommended. Wear quality footwear that is the right size and fits your activities. Your podiatrist can recommend footwear specific to your needs.



Inspect your feet regularly. Check your feet daily for injuries or changes, and if you notice something, visit your podiatrist right away. Can't see your feet? Ask a family member to help you, or use a mirror.