

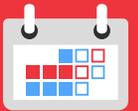
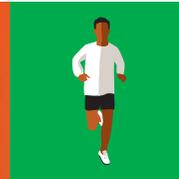
FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

NOVEMBER 2020

SPECIAL EDITION

**KEEP YOUR
APPOINTMENT.
KEEP YOUR FEET.**



Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, podiatrists have seen some of the sickest patients of their careers. But these patients aren't suffering from COVID. Instead, concerned about exposure to the virus, they have delayed regular care and avoided treatment for injuries, resulting in serious diabetic foot wounds, gangrene, and even risk of sepsis, a life-threatening systemic infection.

"People with diabetes are absolutely right to take precautions against exposure to COVID-19," said Seth Rubenstein, DPM, president of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA). "They are at high risk of the virus, and they should wear masks in public, maintain social distance, and avoid unnecessary opportunities for exposure. But they should not avoid their regular diabetes care."

Many APMA member podiatrists are reporting higher-than-usual numbers of amputations since the pandemic began. "When patients with diabetes avoid preventive care or ignore injuries, the risk of a limb-threatening infection is huge," said Dr. Rubenstein. "If they delay seeking care from their podiatrist for too long, the infection and resulting tissue death can make an amputation unavoidable."

The good news? There are ways to take control of your diabetes and safeguard your health during the pandemic.

"APMA encourages people with diabetes to follow three simple steps to protect their feet during the COVID-19 pandemic. We want you to stay active, stay alert, and stay in contact."

— Priya Parthasarathy, DPM, chair of the APMA Communications Committee

STAY ACTIVE.

Get proper nutrition and exercise. Consider physical activity a prescription to be taken daily!

STAY ALERT.

Track your daily blood sugar levels and your A1C. Perform daily foot exams (a caregiver or family member can help) to look for any changes to your feet, including color, temperature, and even minor injuries such as scratches and scrapes. Protect your feet with shoes even around the house to avoid injuries.

STAY IN CONTACT.

Keep up with all appointments with your diabetes care team and reach out to your podiatrist immediately if you notice a wound, injury, or other changes to your feet.

Visiting your podiatrist's office during the pandemic to maintain regular care is a low-risk proposition. Avoiding care out of fear, however, presents significant health risks including amputation and even death.

YOUR PODIATRIST IS FOLLOWING PROTOCOLS TO KEEP HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS AND PATIENTS ALIKE SAFE DURING THE PANDEMIC.

SOME STEPS YOUR PODIATRIST MAY BE TAKING:

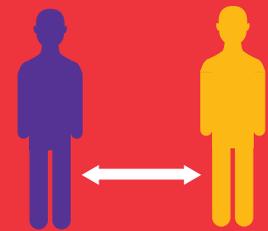


WEARING ADDITIONAL PPE

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is critical to protecting patients and providers from exposure. "I wear a face shield and a face mask when treating patients, as do my staff," said Dr. Parthasarathy. Your office should also require patients and guests to wear masks during their appointments and in the waiting areas.

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

Medical offices are making significant efforts to promote social distancing in waiting areas, from limiting the number of patient appointments to removing or blocking off chairs in the waiting room. "It's mandatory that patients and guests maintain appropriate distance from other patients when entering and exiting our office," said Dr. Parthasarathy.



IMPLEMENTING STRICT DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS

The Environmental Protection Agency has issued guidelines for disinfecting businesses. Ask your podiatrist's office about how they are disinfecting frequently touched surfaces between patients.

Don't be afraid to voice your concerns and find out what steps your podiatrist's practice is taking when you make your appointment. Also, ask about the option for telehealth appointments. Virtual appointments may not be appropriate for every patient, but your podiatrist may offer them under some circumstances.

DON'T LET FEAR OF COVID-19 KEEP YOU FROM SEEKING CARE FOR YOUR DIABETES.

KEEP YOUR APPOINTMENT. KEEP YOUR FEET.

For more information, visit www.apma.org/diabetes.