

FOOTPRINTS

An Informational Newsletter for Patients of APMA Member Podiatrists

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ES HORA

You're vaccinated and taking the proper precautions to protect yourself from COVID-19. It's time to get back to life and back in your game. Time to develop healthier habits. Time to protect your family by paying attention to your diabetes.

"Diabetes is a huge concern for members of the Hispanic community," said Javier LaFontaine, DPM, MS, a podiatrist in Dallas, TX, and a spokesperson for the American Podiatric Medical Association. "If you are Hispanic, your risk of developing diabetes is twice as high as a white American's risk. And a wide variety of factors, from language barriers to insurance coverage, may make it more difficult to manage your diabetes."



Diabetes can have serious consequences, including ulcers on your feet, infections, amputation, and even death. But there are simple steps Dr. LaFontaine said can help prevent complications in your feet:

- ▶ **IT'S TIME** to do a daily foot check. Look for minor injuries and changes to temperature, color, and even hair growth. If you notice a problem, see a podiatrist right away.
- ▶ **IT'S TIME** to stop depending on home remedies. See a podiatrist for proper diagnosis and regular care.
- ▶ **IT'S TIME** to get back in your game. Check with your podiatrist before you return to sports and other activities for advice on how to avoid injuries. When you have diabetes, even a minor foot injury can mean big trouble.
- ▶ **IT'S TIME** to cut back the comfort foods. Healthy food is medicine, and small changes can have a big impact for your diabetes. Monitor your blood sugar and see a primary care doctor regularly.
- ▶ **IT'S TIME** to see a podiatrist for regular diabetic foot exams at least once a year. Ask about telehealth options that will allow you to include your spouse or a family member.

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"Every culture has its superstitions," Dr. LaFontaine said. "But don't make decisions about your health without getting the facts." Below, we separate myth from fact when it comes to diabetes and your feet:

✗ Diabetes is curable.

✓ There's no cure for diabetes, but with a healthy lifestyle, some people do go into "remission." Remission means they no longer require medication to control their blood sugar. Keeping your blood sugar well-controlled is key to avoiding complications of diabetes in your feet, such as loss of sensation, diabetic ulcers, and even amputations.

✗ Once you have diabetes, you're doomed.

✓ Healthy lifestyle choices and regular care from your health-care team can help you manage diabetes and avoid serious complications! See a podiatrist at least once a year for regular foot checks, and conduct a self-exam every day to detect changes in your feet. Look for changes in color, temperature, and even hair growth, and if you notice even a small injury, see your podiatrist right away.

✗ You can heal wounds with aloe vera, arnica, or even onions!

✓ Never rely on home remedies to treat diabetic foot wounds. Diabetic wounds are difficult and slow to heal. They place you at high risk for life- and limb-threatening infection. It's time to see a podiatrist at the first sign of a wound!

✗ Open-toe sandals are best for your feet because they are breathable.

✓ People with diabetes should always wear supportive, protective, closed-toe footwear (even inside) to reduce the risk of injury. Even a minor injury in a person with diabetes can lead to a serious diabetic wound and infection.

✗ Losing a toe can make a man impotent.

✓ Losing a toe, a foot, or even a leg has no impact on sexual performance. Diabetes can cause other health problems, such as vascular disease or neurological issues, that may lead to erectile dysfunction. Bottom line: Take care of your diabetes to avoid any complications. See an APMA-member podiatrist regularly for foot care. Podiatrists are experts in diabetes and wound care. They can help prevent wounds and avoid amputations.

To learn more, visit **www.apma.org/diabetes** and make an appointment with an APMA-member podiatrist today.

