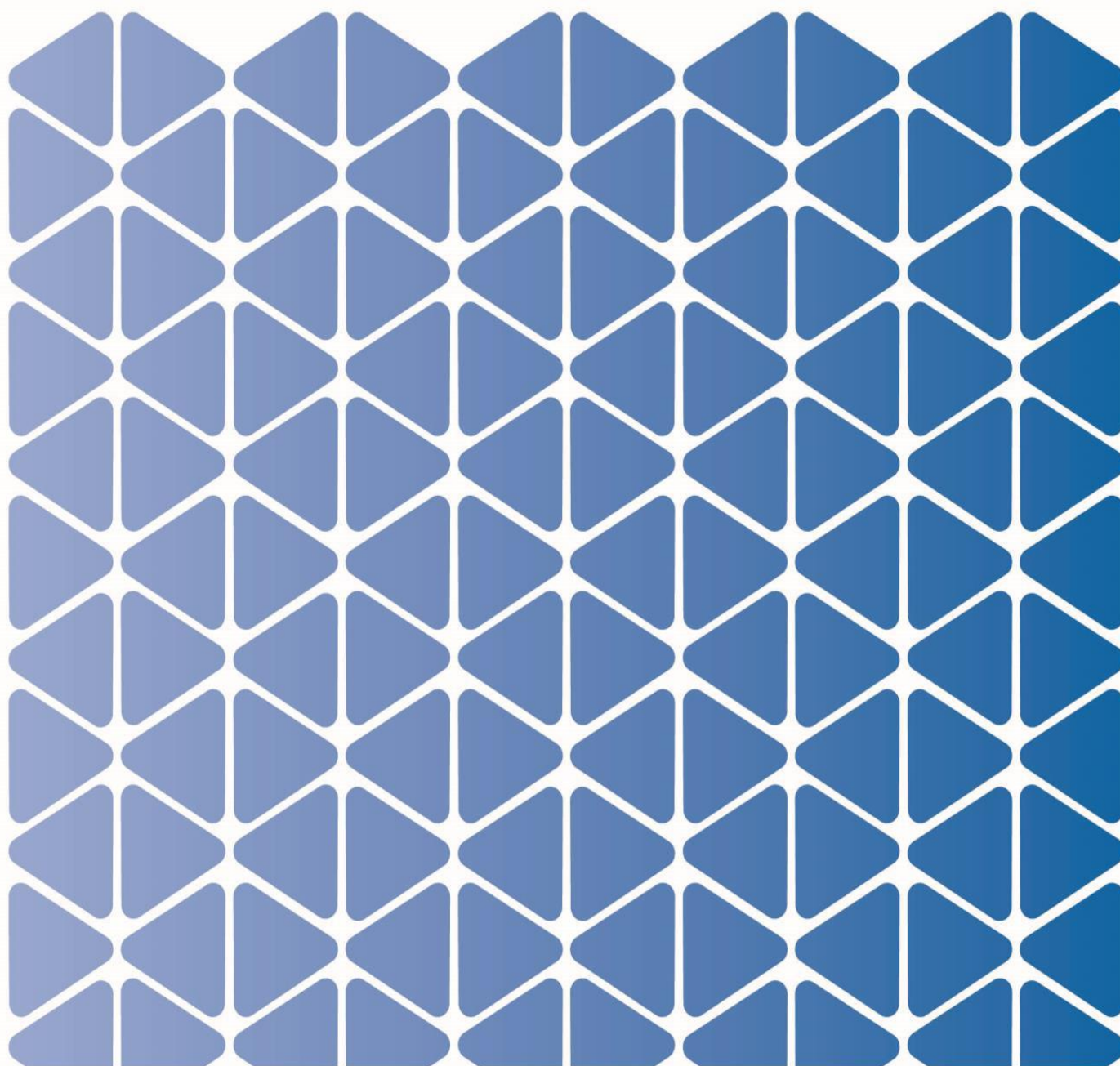


PATIENT INFORMATION

Don't Let Diabetes Steal your Steps!



People with diabetes may be aware that they need to take special care of their feet, but may not fully understand why. This booklet aims to provide you with essential information about foot complications in diabetes, helping you take proactive steps to prevent them.

Why are People with Diabetes at Risk?

Diabetes can significantly increase your risk of developing foot problems. High blood sugar levels can damage nerves (neuropathy) and blood vessels (angiopathy), leading to:

- **Nerve Damage (Neuropathy)**
 - Loss of sensation (reduced ability to feel pain, temperature, and vibration)
 - Muscle weakness and changes in foot shape
 - Reduced sweat production, leading to dry, cracked skin
- **Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)**
 - Reduced blood flow to the feet, resulting in poor circulation, slow wound healing, and increased risk of injury.

Other Risk Factors:

- Foot deformities
- Smoking
- Inactivity
- Obesity
- Age over 60

Know Your Own Feet

Regular foot inspections are crucial. Look for:

- **Signs of Reduced Blood Flow (PAD):** Cramps, shiny skin, cold feet, discolouration, wounds, pain.
- **Signs of Nerve Damage (Neuropathy):** Tingling, numbness, pain, excessive sweating or lack of sweating, redness, changes in foot shape, loss of sensation.

Footnote: If you notice any of these symptoms, consult your doctor, nurse or podiatrist promptly. Seek immediate medical attention for any wounds, sores, new swelling or discolouration.

Ten Steps to Healthier Feet

- 1. Manage Your Diabetes:** Work closely with your healthcare team to control your blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol.
- 2. Daily Foot Checks:** Inspect your feet daily for cuts, blisters, cracks, calluses, corns, bruises, red spots, swelling, and any signs of infection. Use a mirror to examine the soles of your feet, or ask for assistance.
- 3. Regular Foot Examinations:** Schedule regular professional foot exams (by a podiatrist) to assess for sensitivity and pulses.
- 4. Daily Foot Washing:** Wash your feet daily with lukewarm water (no hotter than 37°C). Dry them thoroughly, especially between the toes.
- 5. Moisturize:** Apply a thin layer of moisturizer to the tops and bottoms of your feet, avoiding between the toes.
- 6. Proper Nail Care:** Trim toenails straight across and avoid cutting them too short. If you cannot reach your feet, seek assistance from a podiatrist.
- 7. Wear Shoes and Socks:** Always wear shoes and socks to protect your feet. Choose comfortable, well-fitting shoes with breathable materials.
- 8. Stay Active:** Engage in regular physical activity, such as walking, swimming, or cycling, to improve blood circulation.
- 9. Protect Feet from Extremes:** Protect your feet from hot surfaces, cold temperatures, and sunburn.
- 10. Choose the Right Shoes:** Select well-fitting shoes with enough room for your toes. Avoid pointed shoes and high heels.

Important Note: HbA1c Control

- **Discuss your HbA1c levels with your GP:** Regular monitoring of your HbA1c levels is crucial for effective diabetes management.
- **Aim for optimal control:** Work with your GP to achieve and maintain a HbA1c level within the target range recommended by your healthcare provider.
- **Understand your results:** Discuss the meaning of your HbA1c results with your GP and understand how they impact your overall health and risk of complications.

Foot Care Treatment

- **Multidisciplinary Approach:** Your treatment plan may involve a team of healthcare professionals, including doctors, podiatrists, orthotists (show specialists), and nurses.
- **Wound Care:** Proper wound care is essential, including regular cleaning and appropriate dressings.

- **Debridement:** In some cases, debridement (removal of dead or infected tissue) may be necessary.
- **Pressure Relief:** reducing pressure on the affected area is crucial for healing. This may involve specialized footwear or other pressure-relieving devices.

Warning: Signs of Infection

Seek immediate medical attention if you notice any signs of infection, such as:

- Discolouration (usually redness)
- Heat or swelling
- Increased discharge from the wound
- Fever
- Chills

Remember: This booklet provides general information. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice and treatment.



Scan QR Code for VIDEO on diabetic foot health/management .

If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.