

# DIABETES AND FOOT HEALTH



## Diabetes – What is it?

It is a lifelong condition where the amount of sugar (glucose) in the blood is too high mainly because the body has lost its ability to metabolise it properly; if left untreated this high level of blood sugar can cause serious health complications throughout the entire body.

### ► Type 1 vs Type 2 Diabetes

Diabetes develops when glucose can't enter the cells of your body to be used as fuel. Insulin is best thought of as the key that would unlock the cells and allow glucose to be used properly. In Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1DM) the body attacks its own insulin producing cells causing no insulin to be produced. Without insulin the body cannot get sugar from the blood stream into the cells. Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) is when the body does not make enough insulin. 58 percent of T2DM sufferers could have prevented or delayed the disease by living a healthier lifestyle.

### ► How Diabetes affects the feet?

Continual high blood sugar levels are toxic for small nerves and blood vessels. Small nerves and blood vessels are quite prominent in the feet as well as the eyes. One of the problem this poses is that if the nerves of the feet are affected you may not feel any problems as they arise. With your immune system also compromised by diabetes this can result in disastrous complications such as necrosis, gangrene and even amputation of toes or feet.

## ▶ **What should I look for and do?**

Ensure you are seeing your GP regularly and diabetes educator and making sure that your blood sugar levels are controlled as best you can. Keep a look out for any signs of infection on your feet such as persistent redness, swelling, pus or odor. If you notice anything like this contact your podiatrist or doctor straight away.

## ▶ **How can I best ensure nothing bad happens to me?**

Ask your GP for a care plan that entitles you to up to 5 free visits to a podiatrist a year. Here you can get your annual Podiatric foot health check. This includes a full neurological, dermatological, biomechanical and vascular screen of your feet. We even have a special blood pressure monitor specifically for toes! If you have any other problems like corns or callus, these can be addressed so they do not get the opportunity to turn nasty if left unattended. Your mhealth Podiatrist will ensure that the highest level of foot health and comfort is achieved and maintained whilst liaising with your GP and any other disciplines needed.