

National Diabetes Awareness Month

By. Dr. Tina Boucher, DPM

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month and most Americans either know someone who has diabetes or is suffering from the disease themselves.

According to the American Diabetes Association, about 15.7 million people (5.9 percent of the United States population) have diabetes. Nervous system damage (also called neuropathy) affects about 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes and is a major complication that may cause diabetics to lose feeling in their feet or hands.

Foot problems are a big risk in diabetics. Diabetics must constantly monitor their feet or face severe consequences, including amputation.

With a diabetic foot, a wound as small as a blister from wearing a shoe that is too tight can cause a lot of damage. Diabetes decreases blood flow, so injuries are slow to heal. When your wound is not healing, it is at risk for infection. As a diabetic, your infections spread quickly. If you have diabetes, you should inspect your feet every day. Look for puncture wounds, bruises, pressure areas, redness, warmth, blisters, ulcers, scratches, cuts, and nail problems. Get someone to help you, or use a mirror.

Here are a few tips you can use daily to help prevent further diabetic foot complications:

- Always keep your feet dry.
- Don't smoke or sit cross-legged.
- Don't soak your feet.
- Trim your toenails straight across, or have a certified podiatrist help you.
- Wash your feet everyday.
- Buy shoes that are comfortable without any sharp edges.
- Wear loose socks to bed.

Dr. Tina Boucher, DPM, practices in Meriden, CT and sees many diabetic patients. Her number one recommendation for those who have diabetes is early prevention. As soon as you find out you have diabetes, make an appointment with a podiatrist. Call 203-238-3668 for an appointment. We are located at 440 West Main Street, Meriden, CT 06451.