

# Monthly Newsletter

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Mar 2016 | Issue Number 10

**Contact Your Foot**

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Proper foot care starts with you



Nutrition plays a part  
in foot health

## Nutrition for Healthy Feet!

When many people hear the phrase, “healthy eating,” they associate it with weight loss or heart health. However, healthy eating and proper nutrition are important for the health of your entire body, including your feet!!

A common problem linked to feet that can be affected by nutrition is healing and repair including wound healing. Many common foods can provide the nutrition your body requires.

A diet should include enough calorific intake and balanced nutrition.

This includes:  
Carbohydrates  
Proteins  
Fibre  
Vitamins and minerals

Include the following 5 food groups

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Grain foods, mostly wholegrain
- Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, nuts, tofu, seeds and beans
- Milk and Dairy

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## Nutrition for Healthy Feet! (Cont'd from previous page)

Following a diet that is healthy and nutritional provides benefits to your feet and total health.

Eating more green vegetables, fresh plant foods and decreasing the consumption of refined grains and sugars is recommended.

### Health Conditions Related to Your Feet

Diabetes and peripheral artery disease are two common conditions that affect millions of individuals.

Both conditions have the potential to harm your feet by damaging arteries that supply blood to your lower extremities.

You can keep your feet protected from these conditions with good nutrition.



The U.S. National Institute of Health recommends a diet low in sodium, saturated fat and trans-fat, and rich in vegetables, fruits and the consumption of omega-3s to decrease the risk of developing peripheral artery disease.

For those with diabetes, a balanced diet limited with fats and sweets and rich in beans, whole grains, lean meats,

vegetables and fruits, is a key way to control and maintain glucose levels and prevent long term complications.

Whether you choose to take on a healthy diet because of a medical condition or to prevent one, following these basic recommendations will start you on a good footing (excuse the pun) to keep your feet and your body fit active and on-the-go. ♦

## Peripheral Arterial Disease: Keeping Your Feet Healthy

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a narrowing of the peripheral arteries to critical areas of your body; such as stomach, arms, head and most commonly the legs.

PAD is caused by atherosclerosis that narrows and blocks arteries in regions of your body away from your heart.

Atherosclerosis is a disease caused by plaque buildup in the walls of your arteries. Plaque is made up of deposits of cholesterol, fats and other substances.

In cases of advanced PAD, you may experience critical limb ischaemia. This occurs as a result of your legs not getting enough oxygen, even at rest. It is common to experience pain in your feet or toes with this disease, even when you are not walking.

If PAD is severe in nature, you may develop painful sores on your feet or toes as a result of poor circulation to the areas. These sores can be referred to as foot ulcers.



Get professional help if you experience arterial disease

### Foot Ulcers

A foot ulcer is an open sore on your foot or toes. The ulcer may only involve the surface skin but can advance to a deep crater that extends through the full thickness of your skin, involving bones, tendons and other deep structures.

Prompt treatment is necessary to avoid infection as well as daily foot care to restore and maintain foot health. Foot ulcers related to PAD can be difficult to heal and if left untreated can develop an infection leading to:

- An abscess (pocket of pus)
- An infection that spreads to the skin and underlying fat (cellulitis)
- A bone infection (osteomyelitis)
- Gangrene (area of dead, darkened tissue caused by poor blood flow)

If you have PAD you should inspect your feet daily and immediately notify your podiatric clinician of any new sores or painful, reddened areas. It is essential to follow your specialist's recommendations for treatment.

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## Peripheral Arterial Disease: Keeping Your Feet Healthy (cont'd from previous page)

Care you can perform at home to help restore your foot health, and prevent an area from worsening, includes the following:

- Check your feet daily. Wash with mild soap and lukewarm water.
- Thoroughly yet gently pat dry your feet, including between the toes. Avoid rubbing – this creates friction.
- Apply a lanolin-based cream to your legs and the top and soles of your feet once or twice daily to prevent dry skin and cracking.
- Inspect your legs and feet daily, including between your toes for any cuts, cracks, scratches or blisters. Monitor for redness and increased warmth. If you identify a 'warning sign' – contact the office to get your foot checked.



- Do not attempt to self-treat calluses, corns or other foot problems. A podiatric clinician should treat these conditions.

In addition to skin care, speak with your podiatric physician about other methods to treat and prevent foot ulcers/sores, such as lifestyle changes, diet and exercise, extra protective footwear and protective custom orthotic insoles. ♦

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