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Diabetics, keep an eye on your feet

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Several factors such as elevated blood sugar levels, poor circulation, a reduced immune system and loss of sensation contribute to a diabetic's vulnerability to foot ulcers and slow healing wounds.

According to Dr. Kenkre Mahesh, medical director of Wound Management Services at Sturdy Memorial Hospital, "neglected or improperly treated wounds can result in infection, or in severe cases, amputation.

Due to the loss of protective sensa-

tion to their feet, diabetics must rely upon eyesight as a substitute to help prevent or detect any breakdown or changes in skin."

If you have diabetes, keeping an eye on your feet and paying attention to shoes are important steps to preventing complications.

Here are some tips for diabetics to follow when it comes to foot care:

- ▶ Look at and wash your feet every day, checking for cuts or blisters.
- ▶ Be sure not to walk barefoot.
- ▶ Wear socks and shoes, making sure the shoes are not worn down and protect your feet.

▶ Before putting on shoes, check for any items such as pebbles and tacks that could cause injury and wounds.

▶ Put your feet up when you can, helping to reduce swelling and improve circulation.

If you notice that you have a wound, immediately contact your health care provider. If there are no signs of healing or the wound has not healed completely within six weeks, advanced wound care may be necessary.

TO LEARN more or to make an appointment with Sturdy's Wound Management Services, please call 508-236-7600.