

NEWSLETTER



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Written By: NIH: News In Health

Foot Health

As we move through our lives, we tend to forget to look down and take care of our feet. When we think of health care we think of blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, and diabetes but in many instances we don't speak up when we experience feet pain or discomfort.

The foot's complexity means there's a lot that can go wrong. "Foot problems can range from annoying to devastating," says Dr. Crystal M. Holmes, who heads the podiatry program at Michigan Medicine. "You can have skin problems like athlete's foot, which is caused by fungus. Or you can have warts, which is a viral infection. These generally are not serious. But certain other skin infections can wreak havoc if left untreated."

You can also get painful structural problems, like bunions or hammertoes. A hammertoe is a stiff bend in a toe's middle joint. It can be caused by stubbing your toe or wearing shoes that are too tight. A bunion is a bony bump, usually on the outer side of the big toe. Bunions tend to run in families. Both conditions can first be treated by wearing shoes with plenty of toe room. Eventually, surgery may be needed.

Other common foot problems include sports injuries, toenail troubles, and painful joints. A condition called plantar fasciitis causes sharp heel pain that declines throughout the day. Many people with plantar fasciitis recover in a few months, in part by avoiding the activities that cause pain. If the pain lasts longer, medical treatment may be needed.

Your feet can also provide early clues to problems in other parts of your body. For example, stiff joints in your feet or ankles could be a sign of arthritis elsewhere. Swollen feet could warn of high blood pressure or kidney or heart disease. Tingling, burning, or numbness might signal some type of nerve damage. And nerve damage in the foot is often a warning sign of diabetes.

Foot Health and Diabetes

People who have diabetes need to pay special attention to their feet. Diabetes affects about one in 10 Americans. Most people with diabetes—about 60% to 70%—develop nerve problems. These can range from mild to severe. Diabetic nerve damage, or diabetic neuropathy, can make you lose feeling in your feet, which can be dangerous.

“A person with diabetic neuropathy may step on a nail and not realize it for days, because they’ve lost feeling in the feet. Or they may put their foot into a hot bath, but if the water’s scalding hot and they have no feeling, they can develop burns,” Holmes says.

Delayed detection of wounds or burns can lead to delayed treatment. And delayed treatment raises the risk of infection.

Foot infections can be especially harmful to people with diabetes. Good blood flow helps to heal foot wounds and deliver medications like antibiotics that can help fight infections. But diabetes reduces blood flow to the feet. That can prevent infections from healing.

When infections don’t heal, amputation of a toe, foot, or part of the leg may be needed. Amputation can prevent a deadly infection from spreading to the rest of the body. But amputations are risky and can seriously affect quality of life.

That’s why NIH is funding several research efforts to improve the treatment of diabetic foot problems and reduce the need for amputations. “Research teams are looking for better ways to heal foot wounds, open up blood flow, and fight infections,” Armstrong says.

If the Shoe Fits

No matter your age or health conditions, wearing well-fitting, supportive shoes can have a big effect on your health. But research suggests that many of us wear shoes that are the wrong size or ill-fitting.

“Our foot tends to widen a bit as we get older, and it can also widen during pregnancy,” Wu says. “So if your foot size was measured at age 20, it probably won’t be the same years later.”

Feet also tend to gradually widen as the day goes on. “So we often recommend that if you’re shopping for new shoes, go in the afternoon or evening when your feet are a little bigger,” Wu says.

If your feet haven’t been measured in a while, consider doing so. A foot-measuring device, called a Brannock Device, can measure both the length and width of your feet. It’s usually available at shoe stores.

Experts suggest leaving a little space at the front of the shoe, because when we walk, our feet tend to shift forward.

“I’ve seen a lot of patients who end up losing a toenail, or it turns black, because the front of the shoe doesn’t have enough room,” Wu says.

Make sure that the shoes are comfortable from the start. “If they don’t feel right, don’t think that you can break them in later. That could cause blisters and pain,” Holmes says. “Pain is meant to be a cardinal sign to tell you that something is wrong. When you don’t listen to it, you get in trouble.”

Any time you have foot pain that lingers, it’s a good idea to see a health care provider. Give your feet the attention they deserve.

“I suggest to my patients that when you go to your doctor, and you take your clothes off for the exam, make sure you take off your shoes and your socks too. Have the doctor take a look at your feet,” Holmes says. “I think that’s important, to catch foot problems sooner than later.”

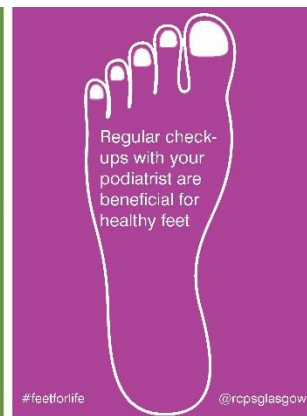
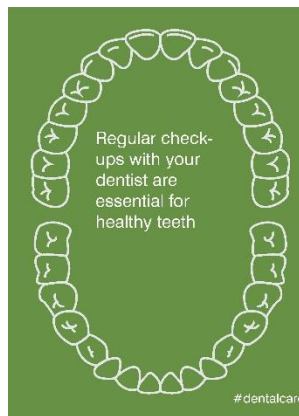
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Taking care of your feet in diabetes

-  **1** Wash your feet daily with lukewarm water and soap.
-  **2** Dry your feet well especially between the toes.
-  **3** Apply moisturising lotion, but do not apply between the toes.
-  **4** Check your feet for blisters, cuts, redness, etc. If present, consult your doctor.
-  **5** Trim your nails straight across and file the edge with a nail file.
-  **6** Change socks daily: avoid dirty and tight socks.
-  **7** Never walk barefoot either indoors or outdoors.
-  **8** Examine your shoes daily for cracks, stones, nails which may irritate feet.



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Chicken Tortilla Soup – Reduces inflammation

Written By: Kelly Gellner, Eat Yourself Skinny

Pre: 10 min; Cook: 30 min, 8 Servings

Ingredients:

- 1 TBSP olive oil
- 1 medium, chopped onion
- 3 clove garlic, minced
- 1 28 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 4 cups low sodium chicken broth
- 1 10 oz can enchilada sauce
- 1 4.5 oz can chopped green chiles
- 1 TBSP cumin
- 1 TBSP chili powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn
- 1 ½ lbs boneless skinless chicken breast or 3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken if using stove top
- Juice of 1 lime
- Toppings: Cilantro, Avocado, shredded cheese, and tortilla strips



Directions: Make in slow cooker

1. In a 6-quart slow cooker, add chicken and the rest of the ingredients (except lime juice), cover and place on high for 3 to 4 hours or low 6 to 8 hours.
2. Remove chicken and shred with two forks and add back into the slower cooker along with the lime juice
3. When ready to serve add shredded cheese, Avocado, Cilantro and tortilla strips to your liking

Notes: To see instructions on stove top or instant pot go to the below website

Nutritional Information:

1 serving: 1 ½ cups | Calories: 285kcal | Carbohydrates: 26.7g | Protein: 32.4g | Fat: 5.1g | Saturated Fat: 1g | Sodium: 1388.8 mg | Fiber: 5.3g | Sugar: 5.6g

Reference: <https://www.eatyourselfskinny.com/chicken-tortilla-soup/>, Retrieved 04/23/2025, By: Kelly Gellner, July 01, 2019; Updated April 19, 2024