



Wangaratta, Benalla, Yarrawonga/Mulwala

T: 03 57215100

F: 03 57216199

E: [admin@thefootcentre.com.au](mailto:admin@thefootcentre.com.au)

W: [www.thefootcentre.com.au](http://www.thefootcentre.com.au)

# Peripheral Sensory Neuropathy

Diabetes can affect your feet by damaging nerves in the legs and feet. This condition is called peripheral sensory neuropathy, or diabetic neuropathy.

Peripheral sensory neuropathy, characterised by a loss of nerve fibres, first affects the nerves furthest away from the trunk, for example, in the toes and the soles of the foot. This condition reduces the speed of conduction of impulses along the nerve, and as a result, the function of the nerve is impaired.

Peripheral sensory neuropathy usually presents symmetrically, and affects the sensation of the feet.

Common symptoms are:

- Pain in the feet (may be sharp, tingling or burning, particularly on the soles of the foot, toes, or front of the legs)
- Skin tenderness
- Numbness

With reduced sensation in the feet, the ability to detect injuries is hindered. Without feeling in your feet, cuts, abrasions, wounds, infections and fractures may go unnoticed. If such problems are left for a period of time, the risks of ulceration and amputation are increased.

# What can be done?

## CONTROL DIABETES

Studies have shown that strict maintenance of blood sugar levels to as near normal as possible, delays the onset and development of peripheral sensory neuropathy. Sensation has even been known to return to previously insensate regions with strict blood sugar control. Blood sugar management, as prescribed by your doctor, may involve changes to diet, regular exercise and medication.

## INSPECT YOUR FEET

Examining your feet daily may aid in early detection of problems when there is a lack of protective sensation:

- Check for cuts, bruises, unusual discharge, corns or hard skin build-up (callous).
- Check footwear and socks for foreign objects before wearing them.
- If you cannot check your feet yourself, ask someone to do it for you, or place your feet up to a mirror to inspect the soles of your feet.

## FOOT CARE

- Protect your feet at all times. Do not walk barefooted, even around your home.
- Ensure shoes fit comfortably, whether they are old or new. Lace up shoes with soft leather uppers, rubber soles and plenty of depth and width around the toes are recommended. Ask your podiatrist about what shoes are best suited to your feet.
- If you are able to cut your nails, cut them straight across. Never cut down the sides of nails.
- Never treat corns or callous yourself; see a podiatrist for treatment.

## FIRST AID

- Minor cuts or wounds should be washed and dried thoroughly.
- Apply a mild antiseptic, for example, Betadine
- Apply a sterile cover to assist with healing and protection
- Never open blisters; protect with a dressing
- Contact your podiatrist or doctor if wounds are:
  - not healing
  - red or inflamed
  - deep or extensive
  - discharging pus

