



Diabetes Education

*High blood glucose levels cause **MORE Fluid Loss** from your body. It also reduces nerve sensitivity and decreases the circulation to the feet, legs and hands sometimes making it hard to identify skin problems. Dry skin is not unusual to see on the legs, feet, elbows, and other locations. Dry skin can crack, letting germs into your body that can cause infections. Therefore it's **IMPORTANT** to take good care of your skin.*



The Importance of Proper Skin Care:

Diabetes can affect every part of the body, including the skin. As many as one third of people with diabetes will have a skin disorder caused or affected by diabetes at some time in their lives. In fact, such problems are sometimes the first sign that a person has diabetes.

Luckily, **MOST** skin conditions can be prevented or easily treated if caught early.

Skin Care Tips

Skin Care Hints:

- ✓ Avoid very hot baths and showers. If your skin is dry, don't use bubble baths. Moisturizing soaps may help. Rinse well.
- ✓ Use mild shampoos. Do not use feminine hygiene sprays.
- ✓ Make sure to dry yourself well especially where water can hide, such as under your arms, between your legs, and between your toes.
- ✓ **CHECK** your skin after you wash. Make sure you have no dry, red, or sore spots that might lead to an infection.
- ✓ Afterward, use a standard skin lotion, but don't put lotions between toes. The extra moisture in this area can cause fungus to grow.
- ✓ Use talcum powder in areas where skin touches skin, such as armpits and groin.
- ✓ Wear all-cotton underwear. Cotton allows air to move around your body better.
- ✓ Treat cuts right away. Wash minor cuts with soap and water. Do not use Mercurchrome antiseptic, alcohol, or iodine to clean skin because they are too harsh.

More Tips 
on Back

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Diabetes and Skin Problems:

There are several things you can do to head off skin problems. Take heed to these *TIPS*.

Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

(Reach Your GOALS)

A ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS

- **A1c:** Below 7%

B ✓ EVERY VISIT

- **Blood Pressure:**
Below 130/80mmHg

C ✓ ONCE A YEAR

- **Cholesterol:**
LDL: Below 100mg/dL
HDL: Above 40mg/dL
for Men & Above
50mg/dL for Women

⊙ Blood Glucose Targets:

- Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
- 2 Hours after eating,
Less Than 180mg/dL

Skin Care Tips

Skin Care Hints (cont.):

- ✓ Use only an antibiotic cream or ointment if your doctor says it's okay. Cover minor cuts with sterile gauze. See a doctor right away if you get a major cut, burn, or infection.
- ✓ During cold, dry months, keep your home more humid. Bathe less during this weather, if possible.
- ✓ See a dermatologist (*skin doctor*) about skin problems if you are not able to solve them yourself.

Skin Problems Associated With Diabetes:

If you notice **ANY** of these changes in your skin, contact your health care provider or dermatologist:

- **Necrobiosis lipoidica diabetorum** or *NLD* is a patch of skin that may be yellow-brown to purple, with a defined border that appears slowly over a period of weeks. The skin over this area may get thin and develop an infection. When it heals it often leaves a brownish depressed scar. It is seen more often with type 1 diabetes than type 2.
- **Diabetic dermopathy** develops on the shin but the spots are smaller, are round and the edges are raised. These may also become infected. When they heal, the scar left is similar to the lesion above.
- **Bullosis diabetorum** feel like small to large blisters (*nodules*) underneath the skin. They could rupture.
- **Acanthosis nigricans** are dark brown to black discoloration on the skin. Its borders blend into the surrounding skin and is more common among Hispanics and African Americans.



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