Provider Algorithm for Diabetic Foot Care

Patient Diagnosis
Type 1 or Type 2

Baseline inspection & sensory exam by PCP

Problems identified?

NO

LOW RISK PATIENTS
• None of the high risk characteristics below.

Low risk feet

Management plan to support self-care of the feet and identification of foot problems

Visually inspect feet as warranted

Annual Comprehensive Foot Exam and Risk Categorization – Include education for self-care of feet and reassess metabolic control

YES

HIGH RISK PATIENTS
One or more of the following:
• Peripheral neuropathy with loss of protective sensation
• Altered biomechanics (in the presence of neuropathy)
• Evidence of increased pressure (erythema, hemorrhage under a callus)
• Bony deformity
• Peripheral vascular disease (decreased or absent pedal pulses)
• History of ulcers or amputation
• Severe nail pathology

High risk feet

Management plan to restore and/or maintain integrity of feet

Visually inspect feet at every visit

Low Risk Patients
• None of the high risk characteristics below.

Management Guidelines
• Perform an annual comprehensive foot exam.
• Assess/recommend appropriate footwear.
• Provide patient education for preventive self-care.
• Perform visual foot inspection at provider’s discretion.

High Risk Patients
One or more of the following:
• Peripheral neuropathy with loss of protective sensation
• Altered biomechanics (in the presence of neuropathy)
• Evidence of increased pressure (erythema, hemorrhage under a callus)
• Bony deformity
• Peripheral vascular disease (decreased or absent pedal pulses)
• History of ulcers or amputation
• Severe nail pathology

Management Guidelines
• Perform annual comprehensive foot exam.
• Perform visual foot inspection at every visit.
• Demonstrate preventive self-care of the feet.
• Refer to specialists and an educator as indicated.
• Assess/prescribe appropriate footwear.
• Refer to specialists and a diabetes educator, as indicated.
• Certify Medicare patients for therapeutic shoe benefits.
• Place a “High Risk Feet” sticker on the medical record.

Management Guidelines for Active Ulcer or Foot Infection
• Verify pedal pulses/doppler pulses on high risk patients, if ulcerations are present.
• Conduct frequent wound assessment and provide care, as indicated.
• Never let patient with open plantar ulcer walk out in their own shoes. Weight relief must be provided.
• Assess/prescribe therapeutic footwear to help modify weight bearing and protect feet.
• Demonstrate preventive self-care of the feet.
• Provide patient education on wound care.
• Refer to specialists and a diabetes educator, as indicated.
• Certify Medicare patients for therapeutic footwear benefits.
• Place “High Risk Feet” sticker on medical record.
## Diabetes Foot Exam Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Patient</th>
<th>Recommended Procedure</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Persons with:</td>
<td><strong>Comprehensive foot exam</strong> to identify high risk foot conditions should include:</td>
<td>Annually or when a new abnormality is noted</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Type 1 diabetes</td>
<td>• Assessment of skin, hair, and nails</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Type 2 diabetes</td>
<td>• Assessment of musculoskeletal structure</td>
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<td>• Assessment of sensation – including 10 gm monofilament pressure sensation, temperature, vibration perception, and ankle reflexes</td>
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<td>• Assessment of vascular status – determination of a history of claudication, palpation of pedal pulses, and ankle-brachial index</td>
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<td>• Assessment of appropriate foot wear</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Reassessment of metabolic control</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education about self-care of feet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Other diabetic related educations</td>
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<td>• Development of an appropriate foot care medical management plan based on positive findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Management plan</strong></td>
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<td>• The subsequent foot care management plan depends on risk category, foot status, and metabolic control.</td>
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<td>• High risk patients should be referred to a health care provider with training in foot care.</td>
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<td>Persons at:</td>
<td>Visual foot inspection to identify foot problems. A physician or other trained staff should perform the foot inspection.</td>
<td>At every visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>• High risk</td>
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<td>As warranted</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Low risk</td>
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<td>(Refer to page 1 for definitions of risk.)</td>
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