



## London InterCommunity Health Centre

### **FOOT CARE DO's & DONT's**

#### **DO Inspect Your Feet Daily**

- ◆ Carefully look at the top of your feet, check between your toes & if necessary use a mirror to check the bottoms of your feet.
- ◆ If your vision is impaired, ask someone to check your feet for you. See a podiatrist or foot specialist to assist you with regular skin & nail care.
- ◆ Look at both feet & compare size, colour & temperature.
- ◆ Check for scratches, cuts, blisters or red spots

#### **DO Wash Your Feet Every Day**

- ◆ Use mild anti-bacterial soap & don't soak your feet – it can dry out your skin, which can lead to cracks & infections.
- ◆ Test the water with your hand or elbow before putting your feet in the bath.
- ◆ Dry the skin well – especially between the toes (moisture between the toes will allow germs to grow that can cause an infection). If you tend to have excessive sweating between the toes, you can try rubbing alcohol applied between your toes after washing & drying well.
- ◆ If you use foot powder, don't allow it to clump between the toes.
- ◆ Apply moisturizing lotion to the tops & bottoms of your feet & especially on dry, cracked heels – but not between the toes.

#### **DO Keep the Skin and Nails in Good Condition**

##### Toenails

- ◆ Should be cut carefully following the normal shape of the nail & allowing for coverage of the tip of your toe – in other words, don't cut too short – the nail is meant to protect your toe!
- ◆ Nails will be softer & easier to trim if done after washing & drying your feet.
- ◆ Smooth the corners with an emery board or nail file – don't cut into the corners.
- ◆ Don't attempt to cut thick or ingrown nails – this is a job for a podiatrist or foot specialist.
- ◆ Don't cut your own nails if you have vision problems – this is a job for an informed support person or the podiatrist.

##### Corns & calluses

- ◆ Keep corns & calluses soft with lotion
- ◆ Gentle use of a pumice stone or heel file will remove some callus.
- ◆ Don't attempt to remove corns or calluses by cutting or using corn plasters or chemicals – removal of corns & thick calluses is a job for the podiatrist or foot specialist.

## **DO Avoid Injury**

- ◆ Don't use strong antiseptic solutions or adhesive tape on your feet.
- ◆ Avoid extreme temperatures:
  - Test water with your hand or elbow before bathing
  - Don't walk on hot surfaces, such as sand beaches or cement around swimming pools.
  - Don't apply hot water bottles or heating pads to your feet – if feet are cold at night, wear socks.
- ◆ Don't walk bare-footed – even indoors.
- ◆ Don't wear shoes without socks.
- ◆ Inspect the inside of your shoes every day for foreign objects, torn linings & rough areas.
- ◆ Don't wear socks that are tight or elasticized at the top.
- ◆ Avoid crossing your legs – it can cause pressure on the nerves & blood vessels in the legs.
- ◆ When buying new shoes:
  - New shoes should be comfortable at time of purchase – don't expect them to stretch out.
  - You should shop in a store that measures your feet – if you have reduced sensation, you may not feel that they fit incorrectly.
  - Slowly break in new shoes by wearing them only 1-2 hours a day.

## **First Aid For Foot Injuries**

- ◆ You may feel no pain when you injure your foot, but you shouldn't ignore the injury.
- ◆ You should:
  - Wash the area with mild soap & dry thoroughly.
  - Then apply a mild antiseptic (for example – Savlon)
  - Don't use Iodine, Epsom Salts or Boric Acid.
  - If a bandage is necessary, use a small gauze pad & non-allergic tape (regular tape can irritate your skin). Remember to change & check the area at least once daily.
  - Rest with injured foot elevated for 20 minutes, several times a day.
  - Contact your doctor if the area becomes red, swollen, has a yellowish discharge or does not appear to be healing within 2 days.

## **Foot Care Supplies**

Always keep these foot care supplies available:

- ◆ Emery boards for filing sharp corners of toenails.
- ◆ Pumice stone for calluses
- ◆ Nivea, Jergen's or any lotion designed for dry skin.
- ◆ Non-allergic tape & small gauze pads.
- ◆ Mild antiseptic solution or antibacterial ointment