



# Highway Diabetes Centre Newsletter

JUNE 2016

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Greetings to everyone,

I hope that this email finds you all well and surviving the winter weather we've had lately. Certainly the upper Highway area does require a few more jerseys and layers than the rest of Durban does.

I wanted to focus this month on foot care and the importance of complications related to the foot in diabetes. As I'm sure you are all aware, part of the aim of good glycaemic control is to prevent potential complications which include eye disease, kidney disease, heart and vessel disease as well as many others. Foot disease in

diabetes can occur as a result of poor cardiac and blood vessel function as well as nerve damage. Both result from glucose levels

that are too high over a prolonged period of time.

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**Opening hours:**

Mon-Thurs: 7am-3pm  
Fri: 7am – 1pm  
(Consults by appt only)

**Contact:**

0317658741 (Tel)  
083-2294737 (A/H)  
086-5812042 (fax)  
highwaycde@gmail.com

**Physical Address:**

Suite 6, New Block  
Centenary Medical  
Centre  
55 Old Main Road,  
Hillcrest

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important for your attending clinician to examine your feet on a regular basis. However, more importantly, it is important for you to examine your own feet. Make a habit of looking at your feet. You may need to use a mirror or ask a friend to do this for you if you are not able to. Pay particular attention to the pressure areas on your feet and in between your toes. Look for cuts on the feet, evidence of infection, changes in colour or abnormal corns and callouses. If you experience pain or numbness in the feet, seek help immediately! Look at your socks for signs of a discharge or abnormal wear in a particular area. You should also make a habit of inspecting your footwear on a regular basis. Look for stones or rough edges on your shoes that may cause problems and make sure you wear good, comfortable shoes at all times.

should not restrict blood flow but should allow your feet to move comfortably. Seek the opinion and advice of a physiotherapist or orthotist who is able to advise you on good footwear that can

protect your feet if you are concerned. For those doing regular exercise, make sure your exercise footwear is not overly worn and provides your feet with the protection they need whilst exercising. Ladies should be extra careful of high heel shoes and decorative footwear that doesn't provide good ankle support.



Good quality socks are also very important. Thin, restrictive socks can limit the essential blood flow into your feet. If you notice that your feet are swollen at the end of the day or have markings from your socks' elastic, its probably time to invest in a better pair!

Keep your feet well moisturised – especially in winter when our skin tends to be very dry. Damage to the feet can be exacerbated by dry, cold feet. Another important aspect of moisturising, is massage. Regular massage of the feet helps to stimulate blood flow and may prevent damage and infection. If you notice a change in the skin colour or texture, consult your doctor immediately.



Keep your toenails trimmed and clean at all times. This may seem a bit pedantic but good foot hygiene is essential in terms of preventing further damage. If you are not able to visualise your nails properly, you may need to ask someone else to do it for you. Do NOT cut the nails too short as this can easily lead to infections. Avoid nails that are thick, discoloured or crumbly – this may be evidence of a fungal infection and should be treated as soon as possible.

Be very careful, especially in winter, of getting into a hot bath without first feeling the temperature with your hands. If your nerves in the feet are damaged you may battle to accurately sense the temperature and may burn your feet unnecessarily. Be careful of using hot water bottles and other such products in winter especially if you know you have some degree of nerve damage or vascular compromise.

**STOP SMOKING!** Aside from its other harmful effects, smoking does not benefit your circulation at all and places you at high risk of developing vascular complications such as foot disease. Often by the time you notice a stasis ulcer, it may be too late to salvage the foot. Besides smoking is expensive – spend that money on good quality footwear and regular pedicures!

If you notice any changes in your feet or are concerned about them, please seek help immediately. We can intervene at the early stages with medical treatment but mostly by the time people seek help, it is too late. Then starts the costly and undignified process of regular dressings, limited mobility and the dreaded surgical knife!

Diabetic foot complications should be a disease of the past! With the education, expertise and services available to people now, these complications should NOT be occurring. Diabetic foot disease is a failure of care. Such tragedies can only be prevented through patient education, good clinical care and the patient taking ownership of the disease and maintaining good glycaemic control. Please spread the word to your friends and colleagues with diabetes so they too may be aware of these problems and be equipped to prevent problems.

This month we are planning a special foot care day – please contact Debbi in the office to find out more about this offer which will include both a foot check-up and pedicure. Please also see attached information on one of our new practitioners who is working from the office and will be joining us full-time in August. We have lots of pamphlets and educational material on foot care and can advise on what further action should be taken.

Warm regards

**Dr Paula Diab & staff**

