

Diabetes & Your Feet

Diabetes is a serious disease that can develop from the lack of insulin production in the body or due to the inability of the body's insulin to perform its normal everyday functions.

Neuropathy

Of individuals with diabetes, 25% will develop foot problems related to the disease. Diabetic foot conditions develop from a combination of causes including poor circulation and neuropathy. Diabetics suffering from neuropathy can develop minor cuts, scrapes, blisters, or pressure sores that they may not be aware of due to the insensitivity. If these minor injuries are left untreated, complications may result and lead to ulceration and possibly even amputation.

Poor Circulation

Diabetes often leads to peripheral vascular disease which inhibits a person's blood circulation. Poor circulation contributes to diabetic foot problems by reducing the amount of oxygen and nutrition supplied to the skin and other tissue, therefore causing injuries to heal poorly. Preventing foot complications is more critical for the diabetic patient since poor circulation impairs the healing process, and can lead to ulcers, infection, and other serious foot conditions.

Your Daily Foot Care

It is very important for diabetics to take the necessary precautions to prevent all foot related injuries. Due to the consequences of neuropathy, daily observation of the feet is critical.

- Inspect your feet daily for blisters, cuts, and scratches
- Wash your feet daily, Dry carefully.
- If your feet feel cold at night, wear socks.
- Inspect the insides of your shoes daily for foreign objects, and rough areas.
- Shoes should be fitted by a footcare specialist and be comfortable at the time of purchase.
- See your physician regularly and be sure to have your feet examined at each visit.

Therapeutic Shoes and Inserts

If a beneficiary has Medicare Part B, has diabetes, and meets certain conditions (see below), Medicare will cover therapeutic shoes and inserts. The types of shoes that are covered each calendar year include one of the following:

- **One pair of depth-inlay shoes and three pairs of inserts;** or
- **One pair of custom-molded shoes (including inserts)** if the beneficiary cannot wear depth-inlay shoes because of a foot deformity and two additional pairs of inserts.

Note: In certain cases, Medicare may also cover shoe modifications instead of insert

How Are Diabetic Shoes and Inserts Covered?

The need for therapeutic shoes and inserts must be **certified by a physician who is a M.D. or D.O.** responsible for diagnosing and treating the patient's systemic diabetic condition through a comprehensive plan of care. This is the **Certifying Physician**.

The **Prescribing Physician** is the person who actually writes the order for the therapeutic shoe, modifications and inserts. This can be your primary physician as described above, as long as the physician is knowledgeable in the fitting of diabetic shoes and inserts.

The Prescribing Physician may be a podiatrist, M.D., D.O., physician assistant, nurse practitioner or clinical nurse specialist.

The following criteria must be met to qualify:

1. **Documentation in the patient's medical record that the patient has diabetes; and**
2. **Document in the patient's medical record one or more of the following conditions:**
 - a. Previous amputation of the other foot, or part of either foot, or
 - b. History of previous foot ulceration of either foot, or
 - c. History of pre-ulcerative calluses of either foot, or
 - d. Peripheral neuropathy and evidence of callus formation of either foot, or
 - e. Foot deformity of either foot, or
 - f. Poor circulation (i.e., small or large vessel arterial insufficiency) in either foot.
3. **Certifying physician** has certified that indications (1) and (2) are met, the patient is under a comprehensive plan of care for diabetes, and is in need of diabetic shoes and inserts. The **Certifying Physician must:**
 - have an **in-person visit** with the patient during which diabetes management is addressed along with a foot exam documenting the qualifying conditions within 6 months prior to delivery of the shoes/inserts; and
 - Sign the **certification statement** stating that the coverage criteria described has been met on or after date of the in-person visit and within 3 months prior to delivery.

*(Certification Statement will be provided by us, the supplier, once the patient has been seen by the M.D. or D.O.)

It is important to note that even though you may complete and sign a form attesting that all of the coverage requirements have been met, there **also must be documentation in the medical records** to indicate that you are managing the patient's diabetes and that one or more of the conditions in **criteria a-f listed above is present**. Also, an **in-person visit with the Certifying Physician** must take place within 6 months prior to delivery of shoes/inserts and this **visit must be documented in the medical record**. If requested by the supplier, you must provide copies of those records.

Medicare also requires the following:

- Prior to selecting specific items that will be provided, the supplier must conduct and document an in-person evaluation of the patient.
- The Supplier is the person or entity that actually furnishes the shoe, modification, and/or inserts to patient and that bills Medicare. **The Supplier may be a podiatrist, orthotist, prosthetist, pedorthist, or other qualified individual.**
- At the time of **delivery the supplier must conduct and document an in-person visit with the patient.**

In addition, an **in-person visit** with the patient, and a new certification statement, **signed and dated by the primary physician** managing the patient's systemic diabetic condition, must be completed on a yearly basis in order to obtain a new pair of shoes or inserts.

Medicare replacement policies follow the same guidelines for coverage. If you have diabetes and have **private insurance** coverage we will check any benefits for you.

Diabetic Foot & Ankle Products



Diabetic Socks

Compression Products



Toe Fillers

Custom Diabetic Foot Orthoses

Custom Diabetic Shoes



Zero-G Suspension AFO

Tundra Leather Healing Walking Boot

Charcot Restraint Orthotic Walker