

Therapeutic Shoes Keep Feet Healthy and Can Prevent Amputations

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA) there are approximately 17 million Americans with diabetes and 25 percent of those people will develop foot complications as a result of the disease. People with diabetes are far more likely to have a foot or leg amputated than other people because many people with diabetes also have vascular disease, which reduces blood flow to the feet, and/or neuropathy disease, which reduces sensation. Together, these problems make it easy to get ulcers and infections that may lead to amputation.

That's why it's so important for diabetics to carefully follow diet and exercise programs and check their feet everyday. In fact, most amputations are preventable with regular care and proper footwear -- diabetic or therapeutic shoes and special socks.

Diabetic shoes are made to provide protection, enhance comfort, and reduce injury. Studies show

that well-fitted diabetic shoes with moldable insoles reduce the development of ulcers and sores that lead to serious foot problems.

Studies have indicated that patients who wear therapeutic shoes had an ulcer recurrence rate of only 17 percent while those who returned to wearing regular shoes had an 83 percent recurrence rate.

Because shoes play such a vital role in the management of these patients, Congress passed the Therapeutic Shoe Bill in 1993, which made it possible to provide depth shoes and custom inserts through Medicare coverage.

The certified practitioners at Rehab Tech are skilled in creating custom foot orthoses and fitting orthopedic shoes that protect injured, sensitive, or at-risk feet. Based on the physician's prescription, the staff can evaluate the condition and design a custom foot orthosis or shoe insert, or custom-fit shoes to the patient's needs.

"Patients with diabetes need to protect their feet from injury and infection," said Mike Hall,



CPO. "Potential complications of diabetic foot disease are loss of sensation, reduced circulation, and delayed wound healing. That's why it's imperative that a diabetic wear his prescribed shoes all the time or anytime pressure is placed on the foot," he said.

"Diabetic shoes are designed to be wider and deeper than conventional shoes to make room for pedorthic insoles, custom made for the patient's feet," Mike explains. "There are several features to look for in a good shoe design including breathable construction for proper air circulation, no interior seams or covered seam to prevent running injuries, and a roomy toe box to prevent pinching or squeezing of the toes."

Rehab Tech fits several brands

Continued on next page



Shoes from front page

of diabetic and therapeutic shoes including, ACOR Orthopaedic, Inc. (www.acor.com), Aetrex Worldwide Inc. (www.aetrex.com), Drew Shoe Corp. (www.drewshoe.com), and custom shoes from Hersco Orthotic Labs (www.hersco.com).

Diabetic shoes should not be purchased off-the-shelf. It's very important to be fitted by a trained professional because a diabetic may not be able to feel an improper fit due to peripheral neuropathy. And, also important to the patient's insurance coverage, the Medicare Shoe Bill requires the footwear to be fitted and furnished by a qualified professional (orthotist, prosthetist, pedorthist, or podiatrist).

Care for Your Feet – Your Life Depends on It

Because diabetics are at an increased risk of serious foot disorders, the American Diabetes Association (www.diabetes.org) recommends the following patient guidelines:



Set a time every day to inspect your feet. Look for red spots, cuts, swelling, and blisters. If you cannot see the bottoms of your feet, use a mirror or ask someone for help.

If you have cuts or breaks in the skin, or have an ingrown toenail, see your provider. Also, tell your healthcare provider if your foot changes color, shape or just feels different (if it becomes less sensitive or hurts).

Even if your feet are fine, your healthcare provider needs to check them annually.

Wash your feet every day. Dry them carefully, especially between the toes.

Keep your skin soft and smooth – rub a thin coat of skin lotion over the tops and bottoms of your feet, but not between your toes.

Trim your toenails straight across and file the edges with an emery board or nail file.

Wear shoes and socks at all times. Never walk barefoot, even at the beach.

Wear comfortable shoes that fit well and protect your feet. Check inside your shoes before wearing them. Make sure the lining is smooth and there are no objects inside.

Don't put your feet into hot water. Test water before putting your feet in it just as you would before bathing a baby. Never use hot water bottles, heating pads, or electric blankets. You can burn your feet without realizing it.

Keep the blood flowing to your feet. Put your feet up when sitting. Wiggle your toes and move your ankles up and down for five minutes, two or three times a day. Don't cross your legs for long periods of time. Don't smoke.

Always follow your healthcare providers' advice when caring for ulcers or other foot problems.

HELPFUL DIABETES WEB SITES

American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/diabetes

Department of Veterans Affairs
www.va.gov/health/diabetes

Juvenile Diabetes Foundation International
www.jdfcure.org

American Association of Diabetes Educators
www.aadenet.org

American Orthotic and Prosthetic Association
www.aopanet.org

Information about Diabetes
www.informationaboutdiabetes.com

Socks Are Important, Too

For a diabetic, socks are just as important to foot care as the shoes. In fact, socks are the first line of defense against injury and infection because socks are in direct contact with the skin of the foot. But not all socks are created equal. The garden variety found in retail stores does not offer enough protection, especially to those suffering from neuropathy.

For a sock to be protective it should contain moisture wicking fibers such as Duraspun acrylic or Coolmax polyester to remain soft and provide cushion. A research project conducted by the University of Missouri indicated cotton socks

were the worst material, especially if the wearer sweats. The best socks proved to be all nylon, with cotton-synthetic blend socks scoring between the other two materials. The team also found that the higher priced socks did not test any better than inexpensive brands.

Diabetic socks also need to be form fitting, but not tight, and should contain no harmful dyes or additives. Some diabetics are sensitive to socks that have coarse seams and rough materials on the soles of the feet, which can create a wound to someone with feet insensitivity. Socks

Continued on next page

Who Can Participate in the Therapeutic Shoe Program?



The Therapeutic Shoe Program was designed to help prevent lower limb ulcers, amputation, and other complications in people who are diagnosed with diabetes and who qualify under Medicare Part B benefits. The reimbursement for the Therapeutic Shoe Program includes the foot evaluation, fitting of the shoes and inserts, modifications, and follow-up sessions. The benefits are renewed on January 1 of each year.

Coverage is limited to one of the following, unless medical documentation requires additional shoes or inserts:

- One pair of off-the-shelf depth

- shoes and three additional pairs of multi-density inserts
- One pair of off-the-shelf depth shoes including a modification and two additional pairs of multi-density inserts
- One pair of custom-molded shoes and two additional pairs of multi-density inserts

Diabetic shoes, inserts and/or modification to the shoes are covered if the patient has diabetes mellitus (and the patient has one or more of the following conditions):

- Previous amputation of the other foot or part of either foot.
- History of previous foot

- ulceration of either foot
 - History of pre-ulcerative calluses of either foot
 - Peripheral neuropathy with evidence of callus formation on either foot
 - Deformity of either foot
 - Poor circulation in either foot
- Also reimbursable under Medicare is an orthopedic shoe, which is attached to an ankle foot orthosis (AFO) or other type of leg brace.

Consult Rehab Tech for details on obtaining orthopedic footwear as well as reimbursement coverage under the Therapeutic Shoe Bill.

Socks from page 2

designed specifically for diabetics are non-binding and minimize constriction around the ankles and legs.

Diabetic socks can also increase leg circulation and ease pain from swollen ankles.

There are several manufacturers and distributors of diabetic socks. Talk with your Rehab Tech practitioner on what will work best for your individual needs.

Diabetic socks are not covered by Medicare or private insurance.



Programs Encourage Disabled Anglers Statewide Trout Season Open

Anglers from across the state are converging on the lakes of New York as trout season just commenced April 1st, and anglers with disabilities will for sure be among them.

Following are some fishing access sites in the state of New York for anglers with disabilities:

- Allen Lake, Allegany County
- Harwood Lake and New Albion Lake, Cattaraugus County
- Hudson River (at Germantown), Columbia County
- Mohawk River (at various locations), Herkimer County
- Oneida Lake, Oswego County

For more information on additional fishing sites, visit www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/fishhand.htm.

Another great resource for disabled anglers is the ARISE Web site, <http://www.ariseinc.org/programs/fish.html>.



Here, you'll find events for adaptive fishing in Onondaga, Oswego, and Madison counties. The organization's adaptive fishing program, ARISE & Fish, offers fishing opportunities to persons with a broad range of abilities, and it also owns an accessible boat, so participants can enjoy going out on the water as well.

Disabled people also can enjoy fishing, thanks to organizations and companies like Fishing Has No Boundaries, Inc., founded in 1986 in Hayward, Wisconsin, which hosts fishing events for disabled anglers.

Rehabilitation Technologies of Syracuse, Inc.

Erie Medical Plaza
1101 Erie Boulevard East, Ste. 209
Syracuse, N.Y. 13210
315.426.9920

Return Service Requested

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 1382

ORTHOTICS:

- Sports
- Lumbo-sacral Corsets
- Acute Through Rehabilitative Services
- Pre- and Post-Surgical
- Soft Goods
- Knee, Ankle
- Shoes and Inserts

PROSTHETICS:

- Upper Extremity, Conventional and Myoelectric
- Immediate Post-Operative Prosthesis (IPOP)
- Above Knee, Computerized Knees
- Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing CAD/CAM
- Below Knee
- Lightweight, Geriatric

HELPING OUR PATIENTS REACH THEIR GOALS

Jeremy and Erika are Wed

Jeremy Hall, a certified prosthetist and registered prosthetic/orthotic technician at Rehabilitation Technologies, and Erika Jennings, an employee at Village Dry Cleaners, were married on October 14, 2006, at St. Francis Xavier in Marcellus. Jeremy, who began working at Rehab Tech at the age of 14, is the oldest son of Mike and Terry Hall, who have owned and operated Rehab Tech since its opening in 1988. The bride is the daughter of William and Mary Beth Jennings of Fairmount.

Congratulations Erika and Jeremy!!

