

# How to Avoid Foot Amputation

Before we get to the point where we even have to talk about amputation, a lot has to happen. Let's go through it.

## “Not all foot infections require foot amputation.”

Usually, there has to be an infection before we start thinking amputation. An infected foot looks red, swollen, usually there is a wound, sometimes pus will be involved. A lot of infections can be taken care of with surgery and antibiotics without having to amputate anything. When infections grow and worsen, our options to save the foot becomes more and more limited. The key is, as soon as you suspect an infection, drop everything and see a doctor immediately. Doesn't matter what time of day it is. Don't wait, not even an hour. Also, don't be afraid, because not all foot infections require foot amputation!

## “Foot pain is a gift that diabetes can take away.”

You can't get a foot infection unless there is a wound. The problem is, if you have neuropathy, you won't feel pain, so therefore foot wounds won't hurt. In other words, you won't even know it if you step on a nail, or have a blood blister! See your doctor at least once a year for a foot check-up to know if you have neuropathy.



Figure 1. Monofilament test for neuropathy

## “Foot ulcers always begin as a callus.”

It is normal to get foot calluses, but if you have neuropathy, those calluses won't hurt. If they continue to get thick, they will become blisters. If walking continues, they will become blood blisters. The bleeding means that there is a break in the skin. This small break can then expand into a foot ulcer. You can't see the ulcer because it is hiding underneath the callus. The callus has to be removed to see how bad the ulcer is. This can be prevented if you develop a habit of checking your feet for calluses everyday. Notice the tiny ulcer on the image below.

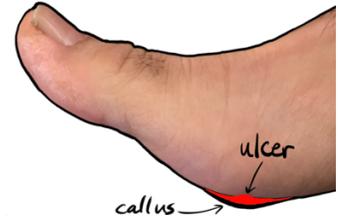


Figure 2. Blood blister

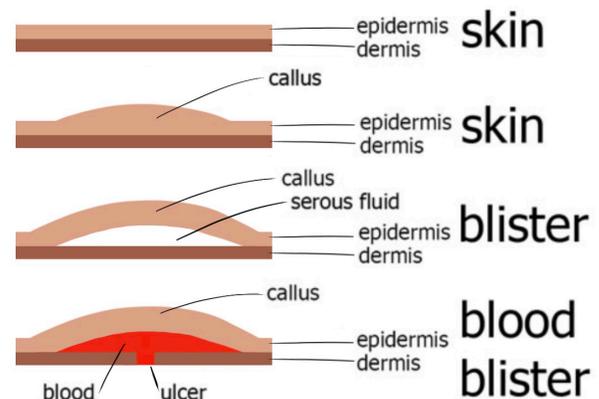


Figure 3. How calluses turn into blood blisters. Blood tells us there is an ulcer.

### Summary:

- Check for calluses everyday.
- See your doctor at least once a year to check for neuropathy.
- If you find a callus, see your foot doctor.
- If you suspect an infection, don't wait. Go to the emergency room right away.

