

## National Diabetes Week 2016 - Your Feet and Diabetes

### Information and Statistics

#### Diabetes in Australia

- Diabetes is the fastest growing condition in Australia.
- It is estimated that there are currently 1.7 million Australians living with diabetes – yet only 1.1 million of these people know that they have diabetes.
- By 2017, diabetes will overtake heart disease as the leading cause of disease burden in Australia.

#### Diabetes in WA

- **On average 28 people diagnosed every day in WA – more than one every hour.**
- There are more than 120,000 people living with all types of diabetes in WA.
- 87% of these people live with type 2 diabetes.
- 10% of these people live with type 1 diabetes.
- 3% of these people have gestational diabetes.

#### Your Feet and Diabetes

- Diabetes can damage the nerves and blood vessels in the feet, putting people living with the condition at risk of ulcers and infections, loss of feeling and amputations.
- **Diabetes causes 85 foot amputations in Australia every week, and 4,400 each year.**
- **70% of all lower limb amputations occur in people with diabetes.**
- Major amputations (leg) were more common in persons with diabetes compared to those without diabetes (743 vs. 644)
- Minor amputations (toe or foot) were 5 times more common in persons with diabetes compared to those without diabetes (1,727 vs. 341)
- Amongst those aged 25-49 years with diabetes, **minor amputations were 27 times, and major amputations 38 times, more likely in Aboriginal people.**
- The vast majority (98%) of the amputations in Aboriginal people were associated with diabetes.
- The cause for the high rates in Aboriginal people is likely to be due to multiple factors including: high prevalence of diabetes and other risk factors, late presentation due to geographic isolation and lack of awareness at individual and community level, various gaps in current services.

#### Comment on foot care from Credentialed Diabetes Educator Sophie McGough

Caring for your feet is very important as long term problems with your feet and legs could eventually lead to amputation.

Inspect your feet **daily**, after your shower as you dry your feet is a good opportunity. Look for any redness, swelling, blisters, corns, calluses or cuts. If you have difficulty reaching your feet, use a mirror or have someone look at them for you. If you find a problem, see your doctor or podiatrist as soon as possible. This greatly reduces the risk of damage to the feet that can lead to amputation.

### Important steps to care for your feet include:

- Attend a Diabetes WA FootSmart session.
- As part of your diabetes management plan, ensure your feet are routinely checked either by a podiatrist, GP or educator every 6-12 months.
- Don't use talcum powder.
- Avoid walking barefoot to reduce the risk of foot injury.
- Wear good fitting shoes that are not too tight or too loose.
- **Don't smoke** – smoking further reduces blood supply to your feet.

### What is diabetes?

- Diabetes is a chronic condition where body is unable to break down the glucose (sugars) in food into energy because it either does not produce enough insulin or cannot use insulin properly. Insulin is a hormone needed to convert glucose into energy.
- There are three main types of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational. All types of diabetes are serious and can lead to complications if not well managed.
- In type 1 diabetes, the pancreas does not produce insulin because the cells which make insulin have been destroyed by the immune system. Type 1 diabetes has nothing to do with lifestyle factors and is most commonly associated with young people but can occur at any age.
- In type 2 diabetes, the body does produce insulin but the insulin is ineffective, or there is not enough insulin, or both. Regular physical activity, a healthy eating plan, maintaining a 'healthy waist' and stress management are the cornerstones of preventing and managing type 2 diabetes.
- Gestational diabetes is a form of diabetes that occurs during pregnancy and goes away as the baby is born. Gestational diabetes puts women at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. 50% of women who have gestational diabetes go on to develop type 2 diabetes.
- There is no cure.

### Additional complications of diabetes

- **It is estimated that nearly 4 out of every 10 public hospital beds in WA are occupied by patients experiencing a complication of diabetes.**
- **People with diabetes are up to four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke.**
- Diabetes is one of the leading causes of kidney disease.
- Diabetic retinopathy affects one in six people with diabetes. This is one of the most common causes of blindness in Australia.

### For more information

- To speak to a Credentialed Diabetes Educator or book an information session, visit [www.diabeteswa.com.au](http://www.diabeteswa.com.au) or call 1300 136 588.
- For all media enquiries, please contact Stacey Boyne on 9436 6211 or email [stacey.boyne@diabeteswa.com.au](mailto:stacey.boyne@diabeteswa.com.au)