

# Foot Ulcers

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A foot ulcer is a sore that forms on the foot. It's a serious problem, and it's crucial to take good care of your feet to prevent them. In some cases, surgery might be needed to treat foot ulcers.

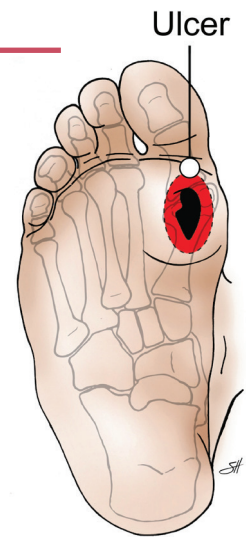
## Signs and Symptoms

You might have a foot ulcer if you notice:

- A sore or open wound on your foot
- Redness, swelling or warmth around the sore
- Pain or tenderness
- Drainage or pus from the wound
- A bad odor from the sore
- A black area in or around the wound

## Causes of Foot Ulcers

Foot ulcers can happen for various reasons, but the most common cause is diabetes. When someone has diabetes, their blood sugar levels can become too high, damaging blood vessels and nerves in the feet. This makes it hard to feel pain or notice when you injure your feet.



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Other causes of foot ulcers can include:

- *Poor blood circulation:* When your feet don't get enough blood, they can't heal properly, and ulcers may develop. Conditions like peripheral artery disease (PAD) can cause this problem.
- *Infections:* If a small cut or wound on the foot gets infected, it can turn into an ulcer. Bacteria can make the wound worse.
- *Pressure and friction:* Long-term pressure or rubbing on one spot of the foot can create an ulcer. This can happen if you wear tight shoes that don't fit well.
- *Nerve damage:* Certain conditions like diabetes can harm the nerves in your feet. When you can't feel pain, you may not notice when you hurt yourself.

While foot problems in patients with diabetes are common, these problems can be serious. Here are a few things you can do to help prevent them:

- Quit smoking.
- Manage your diabetes from day to day, including foot care.
- Inspect your feet and shoes daily.
- Establish care with a podiatrist for routine diabetic foot care, including the trimming of nails, corns, and calluses. (It is not recommended to allow family members or nail shops to do so, due to increased risk of creating a wound that may not heal or getting an infection from a break in the skin.)

## When is Surgery Necessary?

Surgery for foot ulcers is usually considered when other treatments like medications, wound care and offloading (relieving pressure from the affected area) haven't worked. Here are some reasons for surgery:

- *Severe infection*: If an ulcer is deeply infected and antibiotics alone aren't enough to control it, surgery may be needed to remove infected tissue.
- *Abscess or collection of pus*: Sometimes, an abscess forms under the skin near the ulcer. Surgery may be required to drain the pus and clean the area.
- *Bone infection (osteomyelitis)*: If the infection spreads to the bones of the foot, surgery might be necessary to remove the infected bone.
- *Non-healing ulcers*: When an ulcer doesn't show signs of improvement after other treatments, surgery can help remove damaged tissue and promote healing.
- *Improving blood flow*: In cases where poor blood circulation is the issue, surgery can be done to restore proper blood flow to the affected area.



Remember that it's crucial to work closely with your healthcare team to decide the best treatment plan for your foot ulcer. Early care and good foot hygiene are essential to prevent foot ulcers from happening in the first place, especially if you have diabetes.

If you notice any signs of a foot ulcer, contact your doctor right away. They can help you take the necessary steps to prevent complications and avoid the need for surgery.

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