

Diet and Diabetic Foot Ulcers

The foods you consume can nurture the body's healing process or hinder it, sometimes dramatically. And diabetic foot ulcers require all the help they can get — 14%–24% of people who develop diabetic foot ulcers will eventually require an amputation. That's a sobering statistic!

Poor food selections contribute to higher blood sugar levels, which can damage blood vessels and nerves, hampering circulation and the healing process. Inflammation caused by a questionable diet can slow healing as well, elevating an ulcer's chance to cause trouble.

Proper hydration is also critical for diabetic wound healing. Drink plenty of water throughout the day. Alcohol and caffeinated beverage intake can dehydrate the body and sometimes spike blood sugar, too.

For optimum healing, avoid the following categories of foods:

- **Sugary items** (added sugars in particular): e.g., candy, sodas, desserts, sweet cereals, iced teas, fruit-flavored drinks.
- **High-sodium foods:** fast food, processed meats, canned soup.
- **Processed snacks:** potato chips, packaged cookies, microwave popcorn.
- **Fatty meats:** sausages, bacon, fatty beef cuts.
- **Refined carbs:** white bread, regular pasta, white rice.
- **Alcohol:** all types.
- **Ultra-processed foods:** TV dinners, instant meals.
- **Caffeine-rich drinks/foods:** energy drinks, coffee, strong teas, chocolate.
- **AGEs** (advanced glycation end products): foods exposed to high-temperature dry heat, such as those grilled, fried, charred, baked, toasted, seared, or roasted.

Foods riding to the rescue to aid healing include:

- **Leafy greens:** e.g., spinach, kale, Swiss chard.
- **Lean proteins:** skinless poultry, eggs, fish, plant-based proteins such as tofu.
- **Whole grains:** quinoa, barley, steel-cut oats.
- **Nuts and seeds:** almonds, walnuts, chia seeds.
- **Nonstarch veggies:** broccoli, peppers, cucumbers, cauliflower.
- **Berries:** blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries, which are also high in fiber and antioxidants.

If you have diabetes, make our office part of your diabetic healthcare team!



Thank Goodness for Last Resorts

Plantar fasciitis is one of the most common culprits for foot pain. The plantar fascia is the thick band of connective tissue running from the heel to the base of the toes. When it becomes irritated or inflamed — frequently due to repetitive strain, overuse, or ill-fitting footwear — it may produce a dull, constant ache or a persistent sharp/stabbing pain. It's frequently worse when a person resumes activity following a period of rest.

The good news is that most cases of plantar fasciitis can be resolved with conservative measures. We're talking rest, icing, stretching the calf muscles and plantar fascia, over-the-counter pain relievers, changes in footwear, orthotics, and physical therapy. But diligence is necessary, as plantar fasciitis can be tenacious.

If, however, you have not improved significantly after six to 12 months of conservative treatment, still have plantar fascia-related mobility limitations, and are unable to carry on normal daily activities, surgery might help you regain a good quality of life.

Surgical interventions include:

- **Plantar fascia release** (open or endoscopic surgery). Small incisions made to the plantar fascia release tension, alleviating pain and improving function. Damaged tissue might be removed as well.
- **Gastrocnemius recession.** This surgery focuses on lengthening the calf muscle, which can reduce stress on the plantar fascia and improve mobility.
- **Heel spur removal.** Sometimes a heel spur (a bony growth) accompanies plantar fasciitis and may need to be removed to relieve pressure.

The above procedures are outpatient, and full recovery may take several weeks to several months, depending on each particular situation.

Don't allow foot or ankle pain to drag you down. Schedule an appointment at our office for a thorough evaluation, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment.

Mark Your Calendars

- Nov. 2** Daylight Saving Time ends: Hawaii, Arizona (except for the Navajo Nation), and U.S. territories do not observe DST.
- Nov. 4** Election Day: The 2000 Gore-Bush presidential election introduced the nation to "hanging chads."
- Nov. 11** Veterans Day: As of Sept. 8, 1980, 24 months of active service (generally) and a non-dishonorable discharge are requirements for "veteran" status.
- Nov. 15** Clean Your Refrigerator Day: Opened ketchup does not need to be refrigerated due to its high acidity (but it shouldn't sit around forever either).
- Nov. 22** Adoption Day: One in 35 U.S. children are adopted (per Lifelong Adoptions website).
- Nov. 27** Thanksgiving: The Pilgrims themselves never mentioned landing at a rock. Plymouth Rock was first referenced over 100 years after their landing.
- Nov. 30** Advent: Advent begins on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas.



Thanksgiving Dinner Clarity ...

Let's begin with dark and white turkey meat. Nutritionally, they are a wash. Dark meat has slightly higher amounts of saturated fat, cholesterol, and calories, but it surpasses white meat in iron, zinc, and selenium and is more succulent. Whichever tickles your taste buds more, go for it. Thanksgiving comes but once a year.

Turkey gets a bum rap for causing sleepiness. Turkey does contain L-tryptophan, which in the right amount can make one drowsy. Just one problem: A person would need to eat approximately four pounds of turkey at one sitting for tryptophan-induced sleepiness to kick in. That's Joey Chestnut territory.

The true culprit of after-dinner fatigue is the abundance of carbohydrate-rich Thanksgiving dishes, which cause a rise in blood sugar and then a crash (nap time) about 60 to 90 minutes later. Just a five-minute walk after dinner can lower your blood sugar level. And don't lie down to nap for at least a couple of hours, unless you enjoy indigestion and acid reflux.

Though canned foods in general are rightfully scorned for high sodium and sugar content, canned pumpkin is an exception. Canned pumpkin is also more concentrated than fresh pumpkin and contains more vitamin A and fiber. **Note:** Make sure you're buying canned pumpkin and not pumpkin pie filling, which is brimming with sugar and salt. Food labels are your friends.

Finally, if you find yourself sweating following turkey consumption, you might have the "meat sweats" — a real condition that invokes a lovely holiday image. The body expends more energy digesting protein than carbs or fat, which increases body temperature and can spur sweating. On that note, happy Thanksgiving!



Oven-Baked Sweet Potatoes With Garlic Oil

Serves 4

Turkey might be front and center, but these oven-baked sweet potatoes drizzled with garlic oil and baked in the oven to crispy, tender perfection are a delicious and healthy complement.

Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 4 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 tbsp. chives, chopped

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. After rinsing your sweet potatoes, slice evenly into about ¼"-thick rounds.
3. Place in a large mixing bowl.
4. Add olive oil, minced garlic, and diced shallot to the bowl with the potatoes, and mix until all potatoes are evenly coated.
5. Layer sweet potato slices into an oven-proof baking dish. Pour any remaining olive oil mixture over the potatoes.
6. Bake in the oven for about 45–60 minutes, until fork tender and golden brown on the surface.
7. Sprinkle with fresh chives before serving.

Note: The key to baking sweet potatoes is to keep the slices as even and uniform as possible. Utilizing a mandoline is highly recommended.

Recipe courtesy of thedomesticdietitian.com.



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Say Thanks to Your Feet!

Our feet are unsung heroes. They bear our entire weight when standing, walking, or running; propel us; enable us to climb, jump, and maintain our balance on uneven surfaces; absorb shock; and are beacons alerting us to systemic issues lurking in the shadows, such as diabetes, nerve damage, and circulatory disorders, among others.

Instead of taking our feet for granted, there are numerous ways we can thank them. For starters, wear comfortable, supportive shoes. Avoid going barefoot in warmer weather and around the house. That's absolutely imperative for those with diabetes, as undetected injuries due to decreased sensation can lead to ulcers and possible infection. Slowed healing caused by diabetes makes these even more challenging to treat.

Wear moisture-wicking socks. Feet left sitting in damp socks are more vulnerable to fungal infections and blisters. Exercise daily to shed excess pounds or to maintain a healthy weight. Extra weight increases the risk and intensity of common podiatric conditions and makes a person more susceptible to diabetes. A proper diet goes hand in hand with daily exercise.



Most of us already realize smoking is terrible for overall health, but the circulation issues it creates frequently affect the feet first. If you smoke, even just here and there, please quit. It may be difficult for some people, but there are plenty of good resources to help.

Finally, don't ignore foot pain or attempt to "power through." And don't try any at-home internet remedies. You'll just make things worse. Persistent pain or discomfort — or any unusual symptoms — calls for an appointment with our office. It's the best way to say thanks to your feet!