

Diabetes and Foot Health

November is National Diabetes Awareness Month – a time designed to raise awareness about both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

More than 30 percent of people in the United States are estimated to have diabetes, including 7-point-2 million who are unaware they are living with the disease. The percentage of adults with diabetes increases with age, reaching a high of 25-point-2 percent among those aged 65 years or older.

SOT

Teresa Mejorado, Physician Assistant, OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Wound Clinic

“Diabetes effects the whole body. It effects the eyes, kidneys, and for us we focus a lot on ulcers, especially diabetic foot ulcers.”

In addition to age, Mejorado says risk factors for diabetes include diet, activity level, obesity and heredity. High blood sugar levels, poor circulation, immune systems issues, nerve damage and infection may contribute to a diabetic foot ulcer.

Approximately 25 percent of people living with diabetes will develop a foot ulcer. As many as 40 percent of people with a healed diabetic foot ulcer will develop a new ulcer within a year. An estimated 14 to 24 percent of people with foot ulcers will experience an amputation. An amputation results in decreased quality of life, increased medical costs and a significantly higher risk of mortality.

SOT

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“It’s where foot care is very important, especially for people with diabetes. Because even just a little bit of pressure – they can’t feel things as well – so they can develop an ulcer with a stone in their shoe, a mis-fitting shoe. So it doesn’t take much and once they get the ulcer it can be hard to treat.”

Early detection and intervention can help to mitigate the possibility of limb loss. Mejorado recommends the following to help prevent diabetic foot ulcers:

Stop smoking immediately, get a comprehensive foot examination each time you visit your healthcare provider, perform daily self-inspections of the feet, or have a family member perform the inspection, take regular care of the feet, including cleaning toenails and taking care of corns and calluses, choose supportive, proper footwear, and take steps to improve circulation such as eating healthier and exercising on a regular basis.

Proper wound care is imperative to healing diabetic foot ulcers. The OSF Saint Joseph Wound Care Clinic offers advanced therapies to patients suffering from chronic wounds like diabetic foot ulcers, including Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, Total Contact Casting (TCC), and Negative Pressure Wound Therapy. These specialized wound care therapies can aid in wound closure, new tissue growth, wound tissue regeneration and much more.

To learn more about the OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Wound Care Clinic, call (309) 661-6230.