

# For diabetics, unhealed wounds can become more than just a pain.



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Diabetes is a chronic disease in which the body either doesn't make enough of the hormone called insulin or is unable to use insulin properly. Insulin is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into the energy our body needs.

If not properly controlled, diabetes can result in a number of potentially dangerous complications. Diabetics are susceptible to glaucoma and other eye problems, kidney disease, heart disease, high blood pressure and stroke, among other serious health problems. A type of nerve damage called neuropathy, which often affects the legs and feet, can be especially troublesome.

Neuropathy often leads to a loss of feeling in the feet. Small cuts or bruises that aren't initially noticed by a diabetic who has lost sensation can turn into chronic wounds called diabetic foot ulcers that do not heal on their own. If these wounds go untreated, they can become badly infected and even lead to limb loss to prevent the infection from traveling throughout the body.

People with diabetes who have neuropathy should take precautions to try to prevent wounds from developing in the first place. They should check their feet every day to look for cuts or even minor breaks in the skin. Some people benefit from special shoes that can reduce pressure on key parts of the foot. Keeping skin from drying out is also important. If any type of callus, blister, or ulcer seems to be developing, it's critical to see your doctor right away. Diabetic ulcers can worsen quickly, so it is important to begin treating them right away.

The Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center at Maimonides Medical Center provides a multidisciplinary approach using state of the art wound care services to treat chronic, non-healing foot wounds. We offer a full range of treatment options, including the use of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBO). Patients with chronic, non-healing foot ulcers and other wounds spend time in a hyperbaric chamber, which is highly pressurized and allows them to breathe in increased amounts of oxygen. More oxygen in the blood and cells can promote faster healing.

Other types of stubborn infections also often respond well to HBO therapy, including a kind of bone infection called chronic refractory osteomyelitis. Radionecrosis – tissue damage caused by excessive exposure to radiation, usually a result of radiation treatments -- is also responsive to HBO therapy. If you are diabetic and are have a cut, rash or small wound on your foot, it is very important that you seek medical attention before it becomes a bigger, potentially dangerous problem.

At the Wound Care and Hyperbaric Center at Maimonides Medical Center, our wound care specialists will work with you to develop an individualized treatment approach. Our goal is to help you heal and prevent complications so that your diabetes does not limit your mobility and keep you from enjoying your favorite activities. Please call us at 718-283-7856 to set up an appointment.



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**For more information, visit [www.maimonidesmed.org](http://www.maimonidesmed.org).  
To find the right doctor for you, call (888) MMC-DOCS (662-3627).**