

Leeds Diabetes Limb Salvage Service

# Guide to the clinic and looking after your foot problem

Information for patients

## **Emergency Action Plan**

*If your foot is hot, red and  
swollen or you have breaks  
in the skin see inside for an  
Emergency Action Plan.*

## **Diabetes Foot SOS**



# Welcome to the Leeds Diabetes Limb Salvage Service (LDLSS).

You have been referred to our specialist clinic because you have an urgent foot problem, probably a foot ulcer, and you have Diabetes.

*We are a multi-disciplinary team who work together at one appointment to:*

- Assess,
- Diagnose and,
- Treat your foot problem

We aim to heal this as quickly as possible , but people with Diabetes may take longer to heal particularly if the blood supply to the feet is poor. Badly fitting footwear, poor diabetic control and infections may also slow down healing .

## Members of the team

### Vascular Consultant

A surgeon who specialises in blood supply to the feet. They may see you to assess if they can improve the amount of blood reaching your toes.

### Diabetes Doctor

A doctor specialising in Diabetes, who will also review your diabetes control and your general health.

### Specialist Podiatrists

A foot specialist who will assess and treat your foot problems. A scalpel is often used to remove dead skin, and if there is a wound it will be redressed.

## Specialist Orthotists

A specialist in footwear and insoles. You may be given temporary footwear or off-loading devices to help your ulcers heal. After you have healed, they may provide you with long-term footwear and insoles.

## Pharmacist

A specialist in medicines, who will see you on your first visit to look at all your tablets and check that they are all correct.

## Diabetes Nurse Specialist

The Diabetes nurse will help you with your Diabetes control and may review your tablets, insulin or equipment you may need. Good control of blood sugar levels will improve the healing of your ulcer.

## Clinical Support Workers

They will help you through the clinical appointment and will help with any other appropriate needs. This includes measuring your blood pressure, weighing you and other necessary assessments.

## Research Team

Representatives from our medical research team will be available in clinic to advice and approach suitable patients about new and innovative research projects happening in Leeds Teaching Hospitals. Involvement in any trials is voluntary and will not affect your on-going medical treatment. If you have any questions regarding any of our studies, don't hesitate to ask a member of the team.

## Clinic Days

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings 8:30 to 1pm.

### Where is it held?

Manny Cussins Diabetes Centre, Ground floor, Beckett Wing, St James Hospital, LS9 7LS

### Appointments:

The clinic only runs in the morning, so afternoon appointments are not available.

Unfortunately this is a very busy clinic with complex patients and other medical issues ,including hospital transport to and from clinic, so there are often delays. We would always advise that you bring something to do and something to eat whilst you wait. We will see people in appointment order.

Your first visit may take longer as you will need to be seen by all members of the team and may need to go for further tests.

### What do I need to bring every visit?

- A list of all your current medication, including any antibiotics started.
- Your blood sugar meter, or a record of your blood glucose levels if you have them.
- Your usual footwear, and any provided footwear.
- A snack in case of delays.
- Something to occupy you as you wait.

## Transport

If needed this is now arranged by the patient or carer.

You need to ring **0300 330 2000** before 2pm, three days before your appointment.

They will ask questions to see if you are eligible and book appropriate transport.

## About Diabetic Foot ulcers

Diabetes is a lifelong condition which can cause foot problems. Some of these problems happen because the nerves and blood vessels in your feet are damaged.

This can cause numbness in your feet (neuropathy) and less blood flow (ischaemia).

These changes can be very gradual and you might not notice them.

If you have a diabetic foot ulcer, this means that the area of skin has broken down and the tissue underneath it is now exposed.

About one in ten people develop a foot ulcer at some stage.

In some people with diabetes the skin does not heal very well, even after only a minor injury.

A foot ulcer can become infected, and that infection may be severe.

If it does become infected you need to seek help immediately, as it can become severe very quickly.

Infections need to be treated with antibiotics. If they are deep infections they may require up to 6 weeks of antibiotics and/or surgery.

Diabetic foot ulcers are sometimes hidden beneath hard skin and can gather dead tissue around them. The podiatrist will need to remove this to assess the wound and help it to heal. This may cause a little bit of bleeding. There is no cause for alarm, but do not try to do this yourself.

# Looking after your Diabetic foot ulcer

## Treatment Plan

Follow the treatment plan as advised at your appointment. Please ask questions if you need any clarification.

- Dressings; The podiatrist will discuss with you who will dress your foot. Regular dressings are usually required every two or three days.  
Do not change the dressing unless you have been shown how to and you have suitable dressings to cover your wound. Avoid getting the dressing wet, or soaking the foot in water. This can prevent healing and cause infections.
- Do not stand or walk on the affected foot

A wound cannot heal if it is constantly under pressure. Rest as much as possible and keep your foot up.

Wear any footwear or casts you have been given all of the time. This includes inside the house. They will help your wound heal, but only if they are worn.

Continue to check your feet every day

Check both feet every day for any other problems, areas or danger signs that could mean infection.

Moisturise other areas of dry skin avoiding any broken skin and the areas between the toes.

## Stop smoking

We strongly advise smokers to stop smoking. It can affect your circulation and cause amputation. This effect is more common when combined with diabetes.

Contact ONE YOU LEEDS on **0800 169 4219** for help and advice. <http://oneyouleeds.co.uk/be-smoke-free>

## Eat healthily

A healthy balanced diet play an important role in wound healing, as it provides the building blocks for new tissue to heal wounds.

Cut back on fat and sugar and eat from the following food groups.

Food group	Benefits for ulcer healing
Bread , breakfast cereal potatoes	Provide energy for the healing process. Fortified cereals and bread provide iron , zinc and B vitamins
Milk and Dairy foods	Provide vitamin A , zinc and protein , especially if you appetite is poor.
Fruit and vegetables	Provide vitamin C and vitamin A . Green leafy vegetables and dried fruits provide iron.
Meat , fish ,eggs and alternatives (nuts and pulses).	Provide protein, iron , zinc and vitamins A and D.



## Danger signs

- Is there any new pain or throbbing?
  - Does your foot feel hotter than usual?
  - Are there any new areas of redness, inflammation or swelling?
  - Is there any fluid or discharge?
  - Is there a new smell from your foot?
  - Do you have any flu like symptoms?
- If you see any of these use your Emergency action plan.

### Emergency Action plan

*If your foot is hot red and swollen or you have breaks in the skin contact:*

**DIABETES FOOT SOS**

**(URGENT ADVICE) - 0778 625 0788**

Mon- Friday 8am to 3pm ONLY.

Not open on bank holidays

Outside these hours please contact your GP or go to A&E.

## Antibiotic treatment.

These are given if there is infection. Report any problems you have with the antibiotics (rashes, nausea or diarrhoea) to the clinic who prescribed them for you. If they came from LDLSS call **0778 625 0788** (Mon- Fri 8-3pm). If the clinic is not available contact your GP.

Do not stop taking your antibiotics unless the person treating you (or your GP ) tells you to. Make sure that you have enough antibiotics to finish the course so that your treatment isn't interrupted.

If the infection is spreading you may need to go to hospital to have antibiotics put into your blood stream through a drip. Use your **Emergency Action Plan**.

## When you are discharged from clinic.

When your foot has healed you will be discharged from this clinic.

At this point we will refer you to Leeds Community Health Podiatry. They have specialist staff who can review and take care of your future podiatry needs.

When you have had one episode of foot problems you are more likely to have another. This is why it is important that you have long term podiatry care.

Any long term footwear given by the orthotist must be worn, to prevent any further ulcers .They should be reviewed by Orthotics regularly to make sure they are not wearing out. The orthotists can be contacted on **0113 206 3866**.

Controlling your diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure level will also help to reduce further foot issues.

If you have any further ulcers you can contact us on **0778 625 0788** (Mon- Fri 8-3 ) to self refer using the **Emergency Action plan**.

## Useful contacts

**Appointments for LDLSS clinic: 0113 206 5068**

**Diabetic foot SOS (Urgent advice): 0778 625 0788**  
*Mon to Fri 8am -3pm (not open on bank holidays.)*

**Email address for LDLSS (accessed once a day)**  
**[leedsth-tr.ldlss@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.ldlss@nhs.net)**

**Leeds Community Health Podiatry: 0113 843 0730**

**Orthotics: 0113 206 3866**



**What did you think of your care?**

Scan the QR code or visit [bit.ly/nhsleedsfft](https://bit.ly/nhsleedsfft)

***Your views matter***



© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 1st edition (Ver 1)  
Developed by: Justine Bolton Specialist Podiatrist  
Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20230117\_004/JG

LN005566  
Publication date  
05/2023  
Review date  
05/2026