



# Healing From the Inside Out: Diabetic Foot Ulcers

## FACT



Proper nutrition plays an important role in the lifelong management of diabetic complications, including foot ulcers.

## FUELING YOUR BODY

Your body needs the right amount of calories and protein every day in order to heal a wound.



Think of calories as fuel for your body, just like gasoline is fuel for your car. Without enough fuel, your body—and your car—can't run properly.

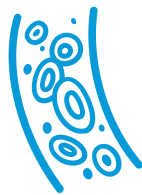
## KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Blood sugar control is vitally important to wound healing. When blood glucose levels are high, the risk for wound complications and infections is



greater. High blood glucose levels result in less oxygen and blood flow to the wound, which can increase healing time.

## GOOD ADVICE!



Poor circulation may mean that oxygen and nutrients have trouble getting to the feet to help the wound heal. Follow your doctor's advice on how to manage poor circulation.

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Protect your heart and blood vessels by:

- Eating less unhealthy fats, such as trans fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, and eating more unsaturated fats
- Maintaining a healthy weight and making healthy food choices
- Reducing your sodium intake, which can help control your blood pressure



## NO SMOKING

According to the American Diabetes Association, one of the biggest threats to your feet is smoking. Smoking affects the small blood vessels. It can cause decreased blood flow to the feet and make wounds heal more slowly.

## KEEP HYDRATED

Stay away from high-calorie beverages. Better choices are water, unsweetened tea, artificially sweetened drinks such as Crystal Light®, or seltzer water with lemon or lime juice.

## THE PROTEIN STORY

Protein provides the foundation for tissue growth, cell renewal, and repair of a wound. Include protein sources at every meal, such as:



- Fish
- Skinless chicken
- Lean meats
- Low-fat cheeses
- Eggs
- Vegetarian protein choices (soy, beans, or lentils)



Amino acids are the building blocks of protein and play a role in wound healing. Arginine, glutamine, and a form of leucine called HMB (or beta-hydroxy-beta-methylbutyrate as you might have heard your doctor refer to it) may prove beneficial to healing. If your wound is not healing, ask your health care provider about targeted amino acid therapy.

## CARBS KEEP YOU GOING

Whole grains are the preferred source of carbohydrates. Good choices include quinoa, oatmeal, brown rice, and baked sweet potatoes.

### Based on information from:

Pham HT, Rich J, Veves A. Wound healing in diabetic foot ulceration: a review and commentary. Medscape Website. <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/407553>. Accessed March 14, 2017.

American Diabetes Association®. Cook with heart-healthy foods. Diabetes.org website. <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/planning-meals/cook-with-heart-healthy-foods.html#sthash.oOLxRmbH.dpuf>. Accessed March 14, 2017.

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