

Diabetic foot ulcers – prevention and treatment

A Coloplast quick guide



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Introduction

Diabetic foot ulcers have a considerable negative impact on patients' lives, and are highly susceptible to infection that all too often leads to amputation. It is essential that diabetic foot ulcers receive the best possible wound management. Successfully treating a diabetic foot ulcer requires a comprehensive understanding of the wound: its cause, progression, risk, and treatment. But more than this, it takes a cross functional approach, where the patient also has an active role in the treatment process.

The information provided here is intended as a general guideline. Please consult diabetic foot ulcer guidelines applicable in your area. For further information, please refer to the International Consensus on the Diabetic Foot, 2011.²

We hope that this quick guide will help you diagnose, assess and treat diabetic foot ulcers in clinical practice, as well as identify opportunities for prevention and minimizing the risk of infection and amputation.

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This Coloplast quick guide was updated in March 2012 in collaboration with Dr. Christian Münter.

"I marvel that society would pay a surgeon a fortune to remove a person's leg – but nothing to save it!"

George Bernard Shaw

The diabetic foot – a clinical challenge

Diabetes is a serious chronic disease that needs attention. Approximately 15% of all people with diabetes will be affected by a foot ulcer during their lifetime.¹

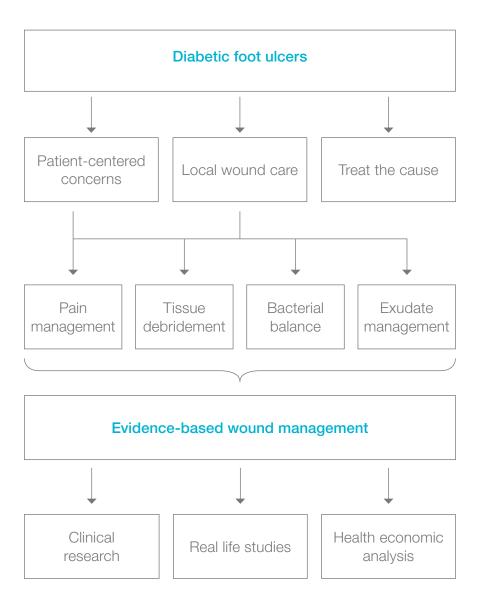
Diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs) often co-exist with vascular insufficiency and are the major cause of gangrene and amputation in people with diabetes. Risk of developing diabetic foot ulcers is greatly increased by reduced sensation and blood perfusion.

Diabetic foot ulcers represent a huge risk to the patient's quality of life, escalating wound/infection management and costs, and account for a large proportion of all national healthcare budgets.

- · Five-year recurrence rates of diabetic foot ulcers are 70%2
- Up to 85% of all amputations in relation to people with diabetes are preceded by a diabetic foot ulcer¹⁻²
- People with diabetes with one lower limb amputation have a 50% risk of developing a serious ulcer in the second limb within 2 years³
- People with diabetes have a 50% mortality rate in the 5 years following the initial amputation⁴

It is possible to reduce amputation rates by 49-85% through a care strategy that combines prevention, the interprofessional diabetes care team, appropriate organization, close monitoring and education.¹

Pathway to clinical care and clinical evidence



How to prevent DFUs

Prevention and education

"49-85% of all diabetic foot related problems are preventable." **Spraul, M., 2000.**⁶

"This can be achieved through a combination of good foot care, provided by an interprofessional diabetes care team, and appropriate education for people with diabetes."

Modified from Bakker, K. et al., 2005.1

"Education of patients, carers, and healthcare providers is an essential component of an effective, interprofessional team approach, ...but effective systems and structures for screening, provision of chiropody (podiatry), and footwear, and prompt treatment when required must be in place."

Modified from Spraul, M., 2000.6

"The most important aspects, for example, danger signs which require prompt action by the patient, should be summarized and repeated." Spraul, M., 2000.6

"Successful diagnosis and treatment of patients with chronic wounds involve holistic care and a team approach. The integration of the work of an interprofessional care team that includes doctors, nurses and allied health professionals with the patient, family and caregivers offers an optimal formula for achieving wound resolution."

Sibbald, R.G., et al, 2001.18

Prevention of ulcer formation

People with diabetes must inspect their feet regularly, or have a family member or care provider do it on their behalf. Daily inspection is the foundation of diabetic foot ulcer prevention. All wounds and sores should be taken seriously early on.

Regular, gentle cleansing with soapy water, followed by the application of topical moisturizers, helps to keep the skin healthy and better able to resist breakdown and injury.

Shoes should be checked to ensure that they fit properly and offer adequate support. Consider athletic/sports shoes and thick, padded socks. Diabetic socks (unrestrictive on circulation) are also available. In the case of foot deformities or special support needs, custom shoes should be considered.

Minor foot injuries and infections, such as cuts, scrapes, blisters and tinea pedis (athlete's foot), can be unintentionally worsened by home treatments that impede healing. Patients should be reminded to avoid hot soaks, heating pads and harsh topical agents such as hydrogen peroxide, iodine and astringents. Minor wounds should be gently cleansed and treated with topical antiseptics. In addition, a physician should inspect any minor wounds that do not heal quickly.

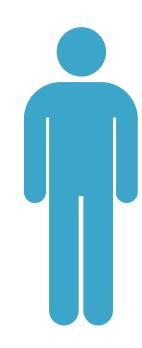
By reinforcing preventive advice and inspecting the patient's feet at routine follow-ups, the physician can help the patient develop and maintain good foot-care practices.

An interprofessional team approach

- · Dermatologist
- Dietitian
- · Endocrinologist
- · General practitioner
- · Home health nurse
- · Interventional radiologist
- · Orthopedic surgeon
- Orthotist
- · Pharmacist
- Podiatrist
- · Rehabilitation team:
 - Occupational therapist
 - Physical therapist
 - Physiatrist
- · Vascular surgeon
- · Wound, ostomy, continence nurse

Others

- · Diabetes educator
- · Foot care nurse
- · Neurologist
- · Psychologist



The involvement of the patient as a member of the healthcare team improves patient care outcomes

The patient's role

Patient self-exam needs to be part of diabetic foot care and follow-up

Education of patient, family and healthcare providers, such as using an easy-to-understand patient leaflet for education, must be a priority.

- Any cut or open skin should be treated by a qualified healthcare provider immediately
- · Inspect and examine the feet and shoes on a daily basis
- · Appropriate footwear
- Nails should be cared for by a qualified foot specialist podiatrist or certified foot care nurse (CFCN)
- Dry skin should be treated with appropriate moisturizers, such as (humectant) creams containing urea and/or lactic acid¹⁸
- Fungal infections, especially of the toe webs require topical antifungal agents or InterDry[®] Ag textile with antimicrobial silver complex (see page 31)

Patients should always remember to remove socks and shoes for regular inspection of both feet

Consider the whole patient to ensure effective care of the foot ulcer

Past history, medications and allergies	Check for medications that may inhibit healing (i.e. steroids, immunosuppressants)
Check for other complications	Neurological, vision, cardiac, renal, vascular
Glycemic* control	Hb (Hemoglobin) A1c < 7.5% (depending on the specific situation of the patient, e.g. medication, risk of hypoglycemia, body weight)
Hypertension* control	< 140/90 mmHg
Clinical obesity* control	BMI < 30 kg/m ²
Hyperlipidemia* control	Cholesterol < 5.2 mmol/L (200 mg/dL)

All 4 are associated with the metabolic syndrome and type 2 onset diabetes. Optimal control of diabetes will improve patient care outcomes.

Disclaimer

These are general guidelines. Please check local treatment recommendations applicable for your healthcare institution

How to diagnose and assess a diabetic foot ulcer

"The VIPS"^{7,8} of diabetic foot management to ensure outcomes

- V Vascular supply is adequate
- Infection control is achieved
- P Pressure offloading
- S Sharp/surgical debridement has been considered

Diabetic foot ulcers typically have a thick rim of keratinized tissue surrounding the wound⁹



Blisters are associated with friction and shear



Callus is associated with increased pressure and bleeding

Local wound assessment¹⁰

History	· Previous ulcer(s), amputations
Local skin assessment	· Edema
	· Color
	· Temperature
	· Callus
Vascular examination	Check for peripheral arterial disease Symptoms are often not found, but the following signs may be present: cold feet, blanching on elevation, absent hair growth, dry, shiny and atrophic skin ⁹
	Palpate and check for dorsalis pedis, posterior tibial, popliteal and femoral pulses ⁹
	Measure the ankle brachial pressure index (ABPI) Toe pressure or transcutaneous oxygen may be assessed, because arterial calcification can cause falsely elevated ABPI results ⁹
Neuropathy 8,11	· Sensory – loss of protective sensation
	Autonomic – lack of sweating that results in dry, cracked skin that bleeds and creates a portal of entry for bacteria
	Muscular – loss of reflexes or atrophy of muscles that leads to foot deformities
Deformity and footwear	· Charcot foot
Tootwear	· Hammer toes, claw toes, bunions
	Check the deformity and address inappropriately fitted shoes

Types of neuropathy¹⁰

Etiology	Sensory Autonomic neuropathy		Motor neuropathy		
Characteristics	Loss of protective sensation No perception of shoes rubbing or temperature changes	Reduced sweating results in dry cracked skin Increased blood flow leads to a warm foot	Dysfunction of the motor nerves that control the movement of the foot. Limited joint mobility may increase plantar pressure Foot deformities develop Hammer toes		
Clinical presentations	Unaware of a foot ulcer or lack of discomfort when a wound is being probed	Dry skin with cracks and fissures Bounding pulses Dilated dorsal veins Warm feet	High medial longitudinal arch, leading to prominent metatarsal heads and pressure points over the plantar forefoot Clawed toes Altered gait		

10-g monofilament testing

The 10-g/5.07 monofilament testing is recommended as a screening tool to determine the presence of protective sensation in people with diabetes. 11-13

Places for testing

- · Plantar surface of the metatarsal heads (minimum of 3 metatarsal heads)^{12,13}
- The great toe/first toe¹²
- The medial and lateral sides of the plantar aspect of the midfoot¹³
- The plantar area of the heel¹³
- · The dorsal aspect of the midfoot¹³





Monofilament testing sites

"There is no clear evidence on how many negative response sites equals an at-risk foot. Some literature shows that even one site with a negative response on each foot may indicate an at-risk foot."

Baker, N. et al., 2005.12

Areas at-risk for neuropathic, ischemic and neuro-ischemic ulcers

In a cross-sectional, population-based study the proportion of the lesions were*2:



Neuropathic ulcers 55% of total diabetic foot ulcers



Ischemic ulcers 10% and neuro-ischemic ulcers 34% of total diabetic foot ulcers

"Recent experience from our clinic indicates that the frequency of neuropathic ulcers has decreased, and the incidence of ischemic and neuro-ischemic ulcers has increased, equaling 50-50%." Mike Edmonds, 2005.

Clinical symptoms of neuropathic and ischemic foot ulcers¹⁴

Clinical signs	Neuropathic ulcer	Ischemic ulcer
Foot deformities	Clawed toes, possible high arch, possible Charcot deformities	No specific deformities. Possible absent toes/forefoot from previous amputations
Foot temperature	Warm	Cold or decreased temperature
Skin color	Normal or red	Pale/bluish. Pronounced redness when lowered (dependent rubor), blanching on elevation
Skin condition	Dry skin due to decreased sweating	Thin, fragile and dry
Ulcer location	On the plantar aspects (forefoot 80%) of the foot/toes	Distal/tips of the toes, heel, or margins of the foot
Callus present	Commonly seen on the weight-bearing areas and is generally thick	Not usually. If present, distal eschar or necrosis
Ulcer characteristics	Usually painless, with a "punched out" appearance (granulation or deeper base) surrounded by callus	Painful, especially with necrosis
Sensation	Reduced or absent sensation to touch, vibration, pain, and pressure	Sensation may be present but decreased if there is associated neuropathy
Ankle reflexes	Usually not present	Usually present
Foot pulses	Present and often bounding. Dilated, prominent veins	Absent or markedly reduced

^{*1%} of the ulcers were considered not to be diabetes-related.

Ulcer assessment

Neuropathic pain	Burning, stinging, shooting and stabbing (non-stimulus dependent)		
Local pain	Deep infection or Charcot joint		
Size	Length, width, depth and location, preferably with clinical photograph		
Wound bed	Appearance - Black (necrosis) - Yellow, red, pink - Undermined		
Infection signs	Odor Be aware that some signs (fever, pain, increased white blood count/ ESR) may be absent. Evaluate the ulcer for signs of infection, inflammation and edema. For more information, please see page 20		
Exudate	Copious, moderate, minimal, none		
Wound edge	Callus and scales, maceration, erythema, edema		

Wound bed



Eschar



Slough



Wound undermining, deep tissue infection



Maceration



Unhealthy wound edge

Superficial and deep infection symptoms^{10,15,16}

Superficial (local) - Treat topically

- · Non-healing
- · Exuberant, friable granulation tissue
- · Bright red discoloration of granulation tissue
- · Increased exudate
- Malodor
- · New slough in wound base



Topical antimicrobial treatment may be considered for superficial/local infection, dependent on the assessment that will direct the treatment. Superficial/local infection may, however, require systemic antibiotics. For further details and updates, please see the International Consensus on the Diabetic Foot, 2011.²

Deep - Treat systemically

- · Pain
- · Probes to bone (increased risk in the presence of osteomyelitis)
- · New areas of break-down
- Warmth
- · Erythema, edema



Signs of local and deep infection are potentially limb and/or life threatening. These clinical signs and symptoms require urgent medical attention¹¹

Wagner classification

Grade	Ulcer appearance
Grade 0	No open lesions; may have deformity or cellulitis
Grade 1	Superficial diabetic ulcer (partial or full thickness)
Grade 2	Ulcer extension to ligament, tendon, joint capsule, or deep fascia without abscess or osteomyelitis
Grade 3	Deep ulcer with abscess, osteomyelitis, or joint sepsis
Grade 4	Gangrene localized to portion of forefoot or heel
Grade 5	Extensive gangrenous involvement of the entire foot

Further reading

International Consensus on the Diabetic Foot, The International Working Group on the Diabetic Foot, 2011², www.iwgdf.org

How to treat a diabetic foot ulcer

Treatment of diabetic foot ulcers

Vascular	· If inadequate circulation, refer to vascular assessment and testing
	· Consider angioplasty, bypass or amputation
Infection	Bacterial swabs help to identify organisms and sensitivity, but do not diagnose infection in isolation from clinical features
	 Superficial/local – consider topical antimicrobial treatment (e.g. sustained silver-releasing dressings). However, it may need systemic antibiotic therapy. The general treatment may also include debridement of devitalized tissue, pressure relief, optimizing metabolic control and vascular intervention²
	Deep – requires systemic antibiotic therapy to initially cover Gram-positive, Gram-negative and anaerobic organisms. Subsequently, systemic antibiotic therapy can be modified according to the results of the culture. In addition, it is essential to consider the need for surgical debridement, drainage of infection, alongside pressure relief and optimizing metabolic control
	Topical antimicrobial (e.g. sustained silver-releasing dressings) may give added benefit together with systemic coverage for deep infection
Pressure	Appropriate offloading must be provided
	· Total contact cast or pneumatic walker
	Deep toed or special shoes and orthotics

Frequent (dependent on the clinical situation) inspection of the diabetic foot ulcer is vital due to the increased risk of infection

Disclaimer:

These are general guidelines. Please check local treatment recommendations applicable for your healthcare institution.

Local wound treatment

	T			
Tissue debridement	Surgical sharp surgery preferred			
debridement	· Hydrophilic paste, hydrogels, alginates and enzymes			
Infection	Dependent on the outcomes of the wound assessment:			
	· Topical antimicrobials (e.g. sustained silver-releasing dressings)			
	· Systemic antibiotic therapy			
Exudate management	· Foams, alginates			
Wound margin management	The treatment of the edge depends on the outcomes of the assessment of the edge of the wound. In general, healthy wounds have a pink wound bed and an advancing wound margin, while unhealthy wounds have a dark and undermined wound margin ¹¹			
Neuropathic pain	Occasionally, neuropathy can be associated with pain. For people with painful diabetic neuropathy, consider the following treatment:			
	Tricyclic antidepressants7,17 (TCAs):			
	· Second generation TCA agents ¹⁷ e.g. duloxetine			
	· First generation TCA agent ^{7,17} : amitriptyline			
	· Anticonvulsants: pregabalin ¹⁷			

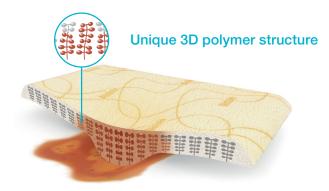
Application of moisture retentive dressings in the context of ischemia and/or dry gangrene can result in a serious life-or-limb-threatening infection¹¹

Infection control is of paramount importance in DFU treatment because of its strong association with amputation. A study of 1,666 patients with diabetes found that foot infection increased the risk of amputation by 155 times¹⁹

Coloplast solutions for diabetic foot ulcers

Biatain® – The simple choice for superior absorption

Biatain is a soft and conformable foam dressing that effectively absorbs and retains wound exudate.^{20,21} This ensures a moisture balance that is optimal for healing of exuding wounds.^{22,23}





Biatain Non-Adhesive – superior absorption for wounds with extra fragile skin

Biatain Non-Adhesive is a soft and flexible absorbent polyurethane foam dressing with bevelled edges.



Biatain Silicone – superior absorption for general purposes

Biatain Silicone is a soft and flexible absorbent foam dressing with a gentle silicone adhesive only on the border leaving the foam free to absorb exudate and manage the wound.



Biatain® Soft-Hold – superior absorption for wounds that are difficult to bandage

Biatain Soft-Hold has a gentle adherent layer covering less than 50% of the foam surface. Allows both hands to be free during dressing application and removal.



SeaSorb® Soft - superior absorption for cavity filling

Highly absorbent alginate dressing for moderate-toheavy exuding wounds of any size and shape.



Triad™ Hydrophilic wound dressing

- · Natural debrider, safe for periwound edges
- · Cost-effective solution
- · Light-to-moderate exudating wounds



Purilon® Gel – Effective and gentle debridement

- · Fast and effective debridement
- · High cohesion the gel remains in place



Atrac-Tain® Cream

Atrac-Tain moisturizing cream is beneficial in the treatment of moderate-to-severe xerosis of the feet in patients with diabetes.²⁴



Sween® 24 Cream

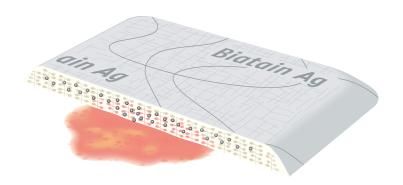
Sween 24 is a 24-hour moisturizer for moderate-to-severe dry skin. Aids with the prevention of xerosis.

Coloplast antimicrobial dressings for infected diabetic foot ulcers and ulcers at-risk of infection

Biatain® Ag – superior absorption for infected wounds

Sustained silver activity during the entire wear time (up to 7 days)²⁵

- · Optimal wound healing environment²⁶⁻²⁷
- · Rapid antimicrobial activity²⁸
- Solution for wounds at-risk of infection^{25,28}





Biatain® Ag Non-Adhesive – superior absorption for managing infected wounds, infected wounds with extra fragile skin

Biatain Ag is a soft and conformable silver foam dressing that is a proven solution for wounds at-risk of infection.^{25,28}



Biatain Silicone Ag – superior absorption for managing infected wounds

Biatain Silicone Ag is a soft and flexible absorbent silver foam dressing with a gentle silicone adhesive border.



SeaSorb® Ag – superior absorption for cavity filling on infected wounds

Highly absorbent antimicrobial alginate dressing for moderate-to-heavy exuding infected wounds or wounds at-risk of infection. Conforms to any shape and aids in debridement.



- \cdot Designed to fight cavity wound infection
- · Effective on a broad range of bacteria²⁹

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Coloplast® products for diabetic foot ulcers

Superior absorption for non-infected wounds*

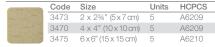
Biatain Silicone



Biatain Silicone Lite

A 10	Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
211	3444	3 x 3" (7.5 x 7.5 cm)	10	A6212
3-25	3445	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6212
	3446	5 x 5" (12.5 x 12.5 cm)	10	A6212

Biatain Soft-Hold



Biatain Non-Adhesive

7	Code	Size	Units	HCPCS	
	6105	2 x 2¾" (5 x 7 cm)	10	A6209	
	3410	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6209	
	3413	6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm)	5	A6210	
	3416	8 x 8" (20 x 20 cm)	5	A6211	

Biatain Adhesive

Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
3430	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6212
3420	5 x 5" (12.5 x 12.5 cm)	10	A6212
3423	7 x 7" (18 x 18 cm)	5	A6213
Heel			
3488	7½ x 8" (19 x 20 cm)	5	A6212

Superior absorption for infected wounds*

Biatain Silicone Ag Coming soon

Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
9636	3 x 3" (7.5 x 7.5 cm)	10	A6212
9637	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6212
9638	5 x 5" (12.5 x 12.5 cm)	10	A6212
9639	6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm)	5	A6212
9640	7 x 7" (18 x 18 cm)	5	A6213
	9636 9637 9638 9639	9636 3 x 3" (7.5x7.5 cm) 9637 4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm) 9638 5 x 5" (12.5 x 12.5 cm) 9639 6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm)	9636 3 x 3" (7.5 x 7.5 cm) 10 9637 4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm) 10 9638 5 x 5" (12.5 x 12.5 cm) 10 9639 6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm) 5

Biatain Ag Non-Adhesive



Biatain Ag Adhesive





SeaSorb Soft Ag

	Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
	3755	2 x 2" (5 x 5 cm)	30	A6196
	3760	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6196
	3765	6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm)	10	A6197

SeaSorb Soft Ag Alginate Filler

Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
3780	1 x 17.5" rope (44 cm)	10	A6199

Other products for diabetic foot ulcers and skin conditions

SeaSorb® Soft

Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
3705	2 x 2" (5 x 5 cm)	30	A6196
3710	4 x 4" (10 x 10 cm)	10	A6196
3715	6 x 6" (15 x 15 cm)	10	A6197

Purilon® Gel

è	Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
- 1	3906	.28 oz/8g	10	A6248
	3900	.5 oz/15g	10	A6248
	3903	.88 oz/25g	10	A6248

Atrac-Tain® Cream

-	Code	Size	Units
Security Committee of the Committee of t	1843	2 g single app. pkt	300
In General Dr.	1802	2 oz/57 g	12
Contraction of the Contraction o	1814	5 oz/142 g	12

	Code	Size	Units
	7910	10 x 44"	10/case
FF	7912	10 x 36"	10 pks/
Same State of the			box

SeaSorb Soft Alginate Filler

Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
3470	1 x 17.5" rope (44 cm)	10	A6199

Triad™ Hydrophilic Paste

	Code	Size	Units	HCPCS
Hall Be	1964	2.5 fl. oz./71 g	12	A6240
G Column	1967	6 oz./170 g	12	A6240

Sween® 24 Cream

	Code	Size	Units
	7090	4 g single app. pkt	300
	7091	2 oz/57 g	12
0	7092	5 oz/142 g	12
	7095	9 oz/255 g	12







Example of InterDry Ag woven inbetween

^{*} Can be used for all types of exuding wounds.

After 30 years in wound care, we at Coloplast believe that absorption is the key to better healing. Our Biatain® portfolio brings superior absorption to daily wound care needs, making Biatain the simple choice for faster healing.

Ostomy Care Urology & Continence Wound & Skin Care



Coloplast develops products and services that make life easier for people with very personal and private medical conditions. Working closely with the people who use our products, we create solutions that are sensitive to their special needs. We call this intimate healthcare. Our business includes ostomy care, urology and continence care and wound and skin care. We operate globally and employ more than 7,000 people.

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