

Charcot foot and diabetes

Diabetes and Endocrinology Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

This leaflet is for people who have diabetes. It is about a foot condition known medically as Charcot foot. The leaflet gives information on what causes this condition and how it can be treated.

What is Charcot foot?

It is a rare condition that affects people who have diabetes.

Diabetes can cause damage to nerves. When nerves in the feet are damaged, the bones in the foot can become weakened and fracture easily. People who have nerve damage will not always notice pain. They may continue to walk and use the foot despite the broken bone. This can lead to a severe deformity.

What causes Charcot foot?

Nerve damage means that people may not notice bumps, sprains, strains and stress fractures as they do not feel pain. This sets off a series of events in which the muscles of the foot lose their ability to support the foot correctly.

This leads to a weakness of ligaments, joints becoming dislocated, bone damage and eventually deformity of all or part of the foot.

What symptoms may I have?

- One foot or part of a foot may suddenly become swollen, red and noticeably warmer than the other foot, without any obvious cause. This is called the active or acute phase.
- There is often no pain but some people notice an unusual ache or discomfort.
- A deformity may start to develop.

Remember that the other foot may also be at risk of the same problem as it can happen at any time.

What is the treatment?

The sooner treatment begins, the better the outcome. You will need to wear a plaster cast, possibly for six to nine months. The cast is changed regularly so that we can check your foot.

In addition to this, you will need to rest your foot on a raised surface such as a chair or bed. This will help prevent further damage to your foot.

What happens if I do not have treatment?

Your foot will become more deformed. This will mean that it will be very difficult to find shoes that fit. You will also be more likely to develop ulcers on the deformed or bony parts of your foot. These ulcers often lead to infections which are difficult to treat and heal in people with diabetes.

What happens after the treatment is finished?

When your foot is stable, you will need to wear special insoles and shoes to protect your foot and prevent further deformity. It is important that you wear these all the time when you are walking or working. This will reduce the risk of the condition coming back and causing more problems.

What can I do to help myself?

- Remember to check your other foot daily while the Charcot foot is being treated. This foot is now doing twice the work so you will need to take care of it. If you notice anything unusual, ask for advice immediately from your diabetes foot team.
- Follow advice carefully. It is important not to walk any more than is essential, especially while you have a plaster on your foot. This will shorten the healing time and will help to prevent deformity.
- If you have Charcot foot and do not take care of your foot, it can become very deformed, causing discomfort and disability. Using your special shoes, insoles and casts as instructed will help to reduce deformity and therefore potential disability.

We are here to help. Please ask if you are worried about anything at all.

Contact details

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Diabetes and Endocrine Centre on:

01384 244399 (8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday)

01384 321420 (10am to 5pm – Mon, Thurs, Fri; and
9am to 4pm – Tues and Wed)

Diabetic Foot Clinic on 01384 244594

(8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/diabetes-and-endocrinology/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email dgft.patient.information@nhs.net

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, 0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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