



• FIELD GUIDE 001

Daily Foot Check

The 5-minute habit that could save your feet.

5 min

PER DAY · EVERY DAY

7

CHECKPOINTS TO SCAN

VERSION

1.0 · Reviewed 2026-07-02

Not medical advice · never
diagnoses

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01 • THE CASE FOR FIVE MINUTES


Why Five Minutes Matters

If you live with diabetes, your feet carry more risk than they let you feel. Over time, high blood sugar can quiet the nerves in your feet (peripheral neuropathy) and narrow the vessels that feed them. The result is a dangerous combination: injuries that hurt less and heal slower.

Most serious foot problems do not start serious. They start as a blister from a new shoe, a small cut you never felt, a red spot where pressure builds every day. Caught on day one, these are minor. Discovered weeks later, they can become ulcers — and ulcers are how most diabetes-related amputations begin.

Here is the good news, and it is genuinely good: **daily inspection changes the math**. Clinical guidelines from the IWGDF and the American Diabetes Association recommend daily foot self-examination for people at elevated risk precisely because early detection works. You are not trying to diagnose anything. You are trying to *notice* — and noticing takes about five minutes.

Think of it like brushing your teeth: small, boring, daily, and quietly powerful.

 **This guide never diagnoses.** It teaches you to observe, record, and involve your care team early. That is the whole job.

02 • THE ROUTINE


The Daily Check, Step by Step

Pick a consistent time — right after your shower or before bed works well, because your feet are already bare and the light is on.

WHAT YOU NEED

Good light · a hand mirror or phone camera · clean, dry feet.

- 1** **Tops and sides.** Look over the top of each foot, the sides, and around the ankle. Scan for anything new since yesterday.
- 2** **Soles.** Use the mirror on the floor, or photograph the sole with your phone. If bending is hard, ask a family member — this is a great caregiver job.
- 3** **Between every toe.** Gently separate each pair of toes. This is where moisture hides and skin breaks down quietly.
- 4** **Heels.** Check for cracks and dry, thickened skin.
- 5** **Touch test.** Run your hand over each foot, feeling for warm spots, swelling, or anything different from the other foot. Your two feet are each other's best baseline.
- 6** **Nails.** Look for thickening, discoloration, or nails digging into the skin.
- 7** **Inside your shoes.** Before you put shoes on, sweep a hand inside. A pebble you cannot feel can do a day of damage.

 **Then record it.** One line in a journal or one photo per foot. "Both feet clear" is a valuable data point — a streak of normal days is what makes an abnormal day obvious.

03 · THE SIGNALS

What You Are Looking For

You are comparing today's feet to yesterday's feet. **Changes matter more than any single finding.**

SKIN CHANGES

- Redness that does not fade after pressure is removed
- A blister, cut, scrape, or crack — however small
- Shiny, tight, or unusually dry skin
- Calluses that are growing or darkening — dark spots under a callus deserve a call

COLOR & TEMPERATURE

- One area warmer than the same spot on the other foot
- Skin that looks pale, bluish, or unusually red

SHAPE & SWELLING

- New swelling in one foot or ankle
- A change in the shape of your foot or arch

TOES & NAILS

- Redness or drainage at a nail edge
- White, moist, peeling skin between toes

SENSATION

- New numbness, tingling, or burning
- Pain in a spot that looks normal

None of these findings is a diagnosis — and this guide will never give you one. They are signals to record, photograph, and share. When in doubt, the answer is always the same: **contact your care team.** **Early calls are never wasted calls.**

04 • CONSISTENCY

Making It a Habit

The best foot check is the one that actually happens every day. Some proven ways to make it automatic:

⁰¹ **Anchor it.** Attach the check to something you already do daily — after your shower, before bed, with your evening medication. Habits stick to habits.

⁰² **Stage your tools.** Keep the mirror where you do the check. Friction kills habits; convenience builds them.

⁰³ **Track the streak.** A simple journal, a calendar with checkmarks, or the Digital Foot Lab app. Streaks are motivating, and the record itself is medically useful — your care team can see patterns you might miss.

04 **Photograph weekly.** Even if you log daily by eye, a weekly photo of each sole builds your personal foot history. Twelve weeks of photos tells a story no memory can.

05 **Recruit help.** If vision, flexibility, or balance make self-checks hard, a partner or caregiver can do the check in under five minutes. Field Guide 010 is written for them.

06 **Miss a day? Just restart.** The goal is most days, forever — not perfection.

05 • ESCALATION

When to Call Your Care Team

Some findings should not wait for your next appointment. Contact your care team **promptly** if you notice:

- Any break in the skin that has not started healing within a day or two
- Redness, warmth, or swelling that is spreading
- Drainage, odor, or dark discoloration anywhere on the foot
- A blister or callus with darkness underneath
- New pain, or the sudden absence of feeling
- One foot or one area persistently warmer than the matching spot on the other foot
- A wound of any size if you have had an ulcer or amputation before

SEEK URGENT CARE THE SAME DAY FOR

- Fever alongside a foot wound
- Red streaks moving up the foot or leg
- A foot that is cold and pale
- Black tissue of any size

When you call, your daily records become powerful: *"I first saw this Tuesday, here are photos from each day since"* gives your clinician a running start. You are never bothering anyone by calling early. In diabetic

foot care, early is the entire strategy.

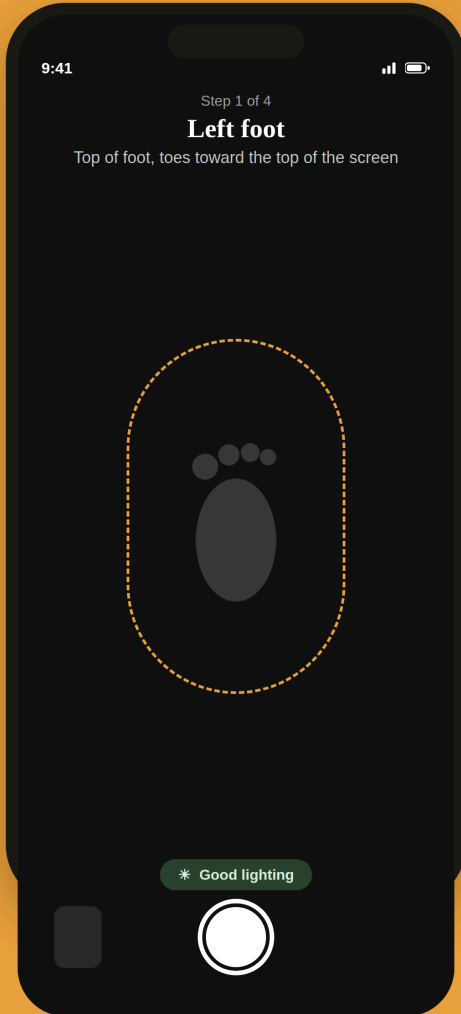
● THE DIGITAL FOOT LAB

Do the whole check in the app

Everything in this guide fits in your pocket. The OpenDiabetic app frames each photo for you, and **Bee** compares today's feet with yesterday's — then keeps your streak so a normal day is on record and an abnormal one stands out.

OPENDIABETIC

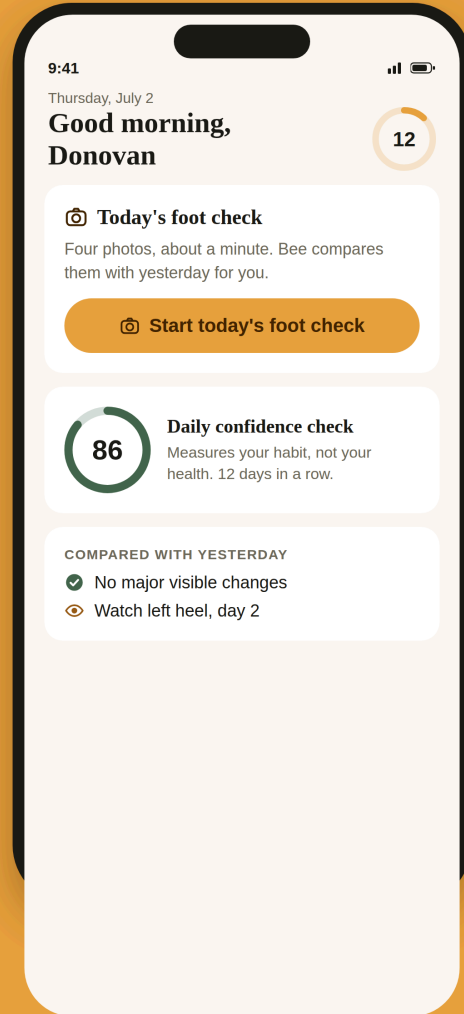
Take a Guided Foot Photo



01 GUIDED CAPTURE – FOUR FRAMED PHOTOS,
ABOUT A MINUTE

OPENDIABETIC

Build Your Daily Foot Care Habit



02 YOUR DAILY HABIT, COMPARED AND TRACKED

● DETACH & KEEP BY THE DOOR

Pull-Out Checklists

Print this page. Tape it where you do the check.

THE 5-MINUTE DAILY FOOT CHECK

- Look over tops, sides, and ankles of both feet
New marks show up here first

- Check both soles with a mirror or phone photo
Pressure injuries favor the sole

- Separate and inspect between every pair of toes
Moist skin breaks down quietly

- Check heels for cracks or thick dry skin

- Feel each foot for warm spots or swelling
Your other foot is your baseline

- Inspect nails for thickening, color change, or ingrowth

- Sweep a hand inside shoes before putting them on

- Record the result — one line or one photo
Normal days make abnormal days obvious

CALL PROMPTLY IF YOU SEE

- A skin break not healing within 1–2 days

- Redness, warmth, or swelling that is spreading

- Drainage, odor, or dark discoloration

- A callus or blister with darkness underneath

- New pain or sudden loss of feeling

- One area persistently warmer than the matching spot on the other foot

SEEK SAME-DAY CARE FOR

- Fever alongside any foot wound

- Red streaks moving up the foot or leg

- A foot that is cold and pale

- Black tissue of any size



Ask Bee

Unsure about something you found? Bee — the OpenDiabetic Digital Foot Lab assistant — can help you describe it, log it, and decide whether it's a "record it" or a "call today." Bee never diagnoses; it helps you get to your care team faster.

REFERENCES

[1] IWGDF Guidelines on the prevention and management of diabetes-related foot disease. IWGDF, 2023.

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[3] Standards of Care in Diabetes — Foot Care. American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Care, 2024.

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doi:10.2337/dc06-1600

VERSION HISTORY

1.0 — Initial release. Five chapters, 12 questions, 3 checklists, 10 glossary terms.

LAST REVIEWED

2026-07-02

Educational content — not medical advice and not a medical device. It never diagnoses. Always involve your care team. © 2026 OpenDiabetic · The Digital Foot Lab.