

## Charcot Foot



Charcot foot (pronounced "shar-KO") is a problem that can happen in people who have nerve damage from diabetes. In rare cases, it is caused by other health problems.

### EARLY SIGNS

Nerve damage in the foot or ankle leads to unexplained numbness, redness and swelling. Pain may not be a factor due to loss of sensation due to neuropathy. The sore foot may feel hotter than the other foot. Unfortunately, the early signs of Charcot Foot may be confused as a sprain, strain or cellulitis, as at this point, an x-ray may not yet easily show any fracture/dislocations, unless the physician is actively looking for Charcot Foot.

### EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

If you have the symptoms above, seek medical attention at an ER and avoid walking on your foot. If you are diabetic and over 40 years old, ask your doctor to consider looking for Charcot Foot in their examination. Early intervention with immobilization with a cast and off-loading for several weeks/months, most often prevents the progression of Charcot Foot. If not immobilized and off-loaded to be non-weight bearing, the progression of fractures/dislocation of the mid-foot can occur within a matter of days-weeks, resulting in a permanent foot deformity and disability.

### **Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety.**

Be sure to make and go to all appointments and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

**Once the Charcot has been stabilized and verified by x-ray and lower limb assessment.**

The next step is to have your footwear assessed by footwear specialist, such as an Orthotist/Pedorthist. Commonly, a custom orthotic insole and/or a custom AFO brace is prescribed for continued protection of the foot bones.

**Taking care of your feet**

- ✓ **If possible, it is strongly recommended to have regular foot care by a regulated foot care professional for ongoing assessment of your Charcot Foot.**
- ✓ Inspect your feet daily for blisters, cuts, cracks, or sores and perform regular foot care. If you cannot see well, use a mirror or have someone help you.
- ✓ Change socks daily. Socks should be thick and cushioned and fit loosely around your feet. Socks without seams are best because seams often rub the feet.
- ✓ Look inside your shoes every day for things such as gravel or torn linings, which could cause blisters or sores.
- ✓ Do not go barefoot.
- ✓ Always get early treatment for foot problems.

**Call your doctor or nurse call line now** or seek immediate medical care if you have symptoms of infection, such as:

- Increased pain, swelling, warmth, or redness.
- Red streaks leading from the area.
- Pus draining from the area.
- A fever.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor or nurse call line if you have a new problem with your feet, such as:

- ✓ new sore or ulcer under your foot
  - A break in the skin that is not healing after several days.
  - Bleeding corns or calluses.
  - An ingrown toenail.
- ✓ You do not get better as expected.

<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/health/AfterCareInformation/pages/conditions.aspx?HwId=uf8589>