

BASICS OF FOOT & LEG WOUNDS

Am I at risk for getting my foot or leg cut off (amputation)?

Even with a first-time wound, your foot and leg are in **danger** of a possible amputation when you have an open wound. Understand your risk for amputation and get proper help.

- Minor amputation = Cutting off part of the foot or toe(s)
- **Major amputation** = Cutting off the leg below or above the knee
- Amputations are more likely if you are Black (4 times), Hispanic/Latino/Latinx (1.5 times) and Native Americans (2 times) compared to White patients with Diabetes.
- Foot and/or leg amputations cause severe changes to how you and your family may live (Quality of Life).
- Loss of job, financial/ emotional stress and how long you may live are possible side effects of amputations.

What causes foot/leg wounds or prevents them from healing?

- **Blood vessel problems:** blockages in blood vessels (arteries) or problems with swelling (veins).
- **Too much pressure:** Continued pressure points on the wound, especially with loss of feeling (neuropathy).
- Infection: can happen in the flesh or bone.
- **Diabetes:** Diabetes causes damage to blood vessels and slows wound healing.
- **Nutrition:** Not getting enough food or healthy foods.
- **Tobacco use:** cigarettes, vaping, and cigars harm blood vessels.
- Untreated mental health problems: may affect your decision-making in getting help and managing your wound.