

This information has been provided to help you manage the dry skin on your feet. People with diabetes can develop foot problems, therefore daily monitoring is essential to maintain good foot health.

Making sure your feet are well hydrated is important to prevent hard skin, cracks / fissures. The use of urea based creams can be extremely successful in reducing dry skin and callus.

How to use your emollient

Moisturising cream or “an emollient” as it is also known needs to be applied correctly in order to work properly. By following these steps you can increase the effectiveness of the emollient.

Step One

Try to establish a routine by moisturising your feet at the same time each day. Ideally wash your feet in warm water for approximately 5- 10 minutes before applying, but this is not essential. Do not soak for longer as this will remove the natural oils from your skin and make your skin dehydrated.

Step Two

Pat your feet dry ensuring that you dry in between your toes.

Step Three

Apply the emollient liberally within **five minutes** of washing your feet. This increases the absorption of the cream into the skin.

Do not routinely apply the cream in-between the toes as this can make the skin soggy, which may cause the skin to split. It will also make you prone to fungal infections as they thrive in a warm , moist environment.

If you have the time, allow 20 minutes for the cream to soak in and then rub in any cream that has not soaked in on its own (some people choose to apply at bedtime to allow a longer time for it to soak in).

A health care professional will explain the dry skin level of your feet. Below is a management guide to help you. If your foot level is between 2-4 the emollient recommended for you is specifically designed for feet and contains an active ingredient called Urea, which helps dissolve dead skin.

Level 1 Well hydrated heels, with little or no signs of drying.		Management If the skin on your feet looks like this then we would advise you apply a standard emollient for prevention, in accordance with manufacturers instructions. Monitor any changes in skin condition and report to a health care professional if any occur.
Level 2 Drying skin but no callus. The foot may have some fissuring / cracks but no callus / hard skin		Management If the skin on your feet looks like this then we would suggest a 10% urea cream for prevention of any foot problems. Neuropathy (loss of protective sensation) can pose a risk to the sweat glands in the feet, you should monitor any changes in skin condition and report to a health care professional if these happen.
Level 3 Drying skin combined with Callus. The foot may have some fissuring / cracks but no open splits		Management If the skin on your feet looks like this then we would suggest a 25% urea cream for prevention of any foot problems. The skin on your foot is at risk of ulceration. A plan for emollient use / active monitoring and treatment may need to be put in place. Please discuss with the health care professional involved in your care.
Level 4 Callused skin with open splits. The splits may be wider than those shown		Management If the skin on your feet looks like this then we would suggest a 25% urea cream for prevention of any foot problems. The skin on your foot is at risk of ulceration. A plan for emollient use / active monitoring and treatment may need to be put in place. Please discuss with the health care professional involved in your care.