



THE DIABETIC FOOT BOOK

A guide to keeping it simple and
preventing complications

Understanding how diabetes can affect foot health and the measures that are taken to prevent diabetic foot complications can be confusing. This book explains how diabetes affects health, and the damage that uncontrolled and long term diabetes can cause to the feet and legs. It discusses the process of screening and examinations that are undertaken by Podiatrists and Doctors to detect changes early and prevent more serious health complications.

The Diabetic Foot Book has simple explanations, illustrations and advice on how to care for diabetic feet and how to recognise the early warning signs of diabetic damage. Following this guide will help keep feet healthy and comfortable, allowing an active and independent lifestyle.

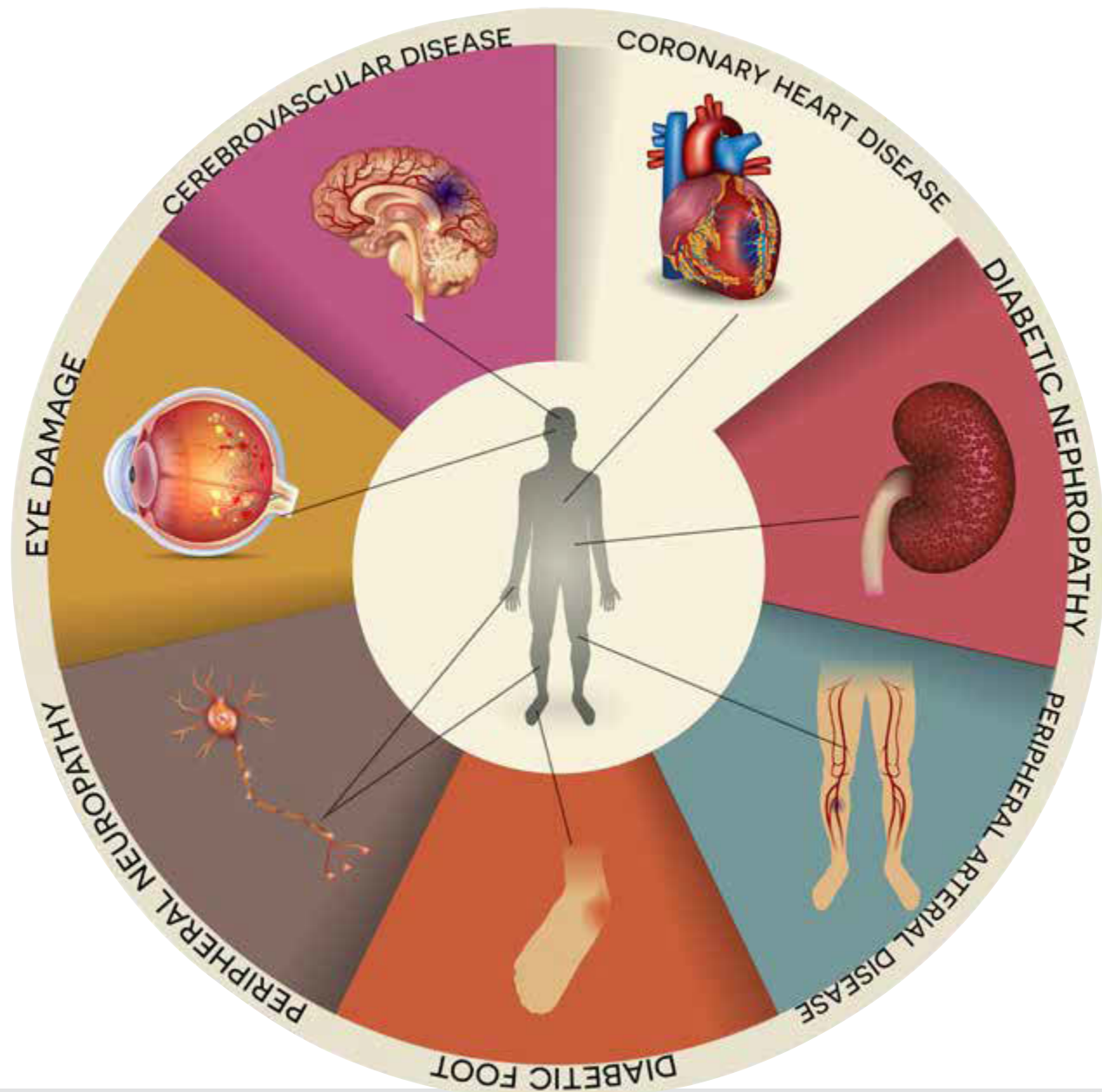
From the Author

I wrote “ The Diabetic Foot Book” after discovering that many of my diabetic patients found diabetic foot care confusing. I wanted to highlight why the feet need special attention and the simple measures that can be taken to prevent foot problems. I believe that is important to understand what to expect from Podiatry foot care and how the diabetic foot care cycle evolves as health needs change, whether it be a annual foot screen or a weekly Podiatry hospital appointment.

Ms Corrina Petric, Podiatrist

How does diabetes affect health

Diabetes is a condition that affects many different parts of the body including the feet. Diabetes causes high blood glucose (sugar) levels which causes changes and damage to the nervous system and the circulation system.



THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY FEET IN DIABETES

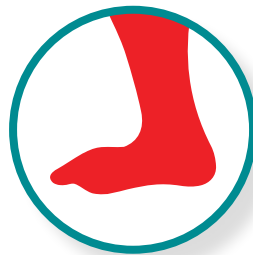
Diabetes affects the feet by causing circulation and nervous system damage.

It is very important to get feet healthy to minimise the damage and to prevent any diabetic complications

Diabetic Foot Complications



You can injury your feet with out feeling it



Feet can deform in shape



Infections are harder to fight



Long lasting pain and strange feelings can develop without injury



Wounds can develop very easily



Loss of balance can occur



Skin more is susceptible to splitting and cracks due to dryness



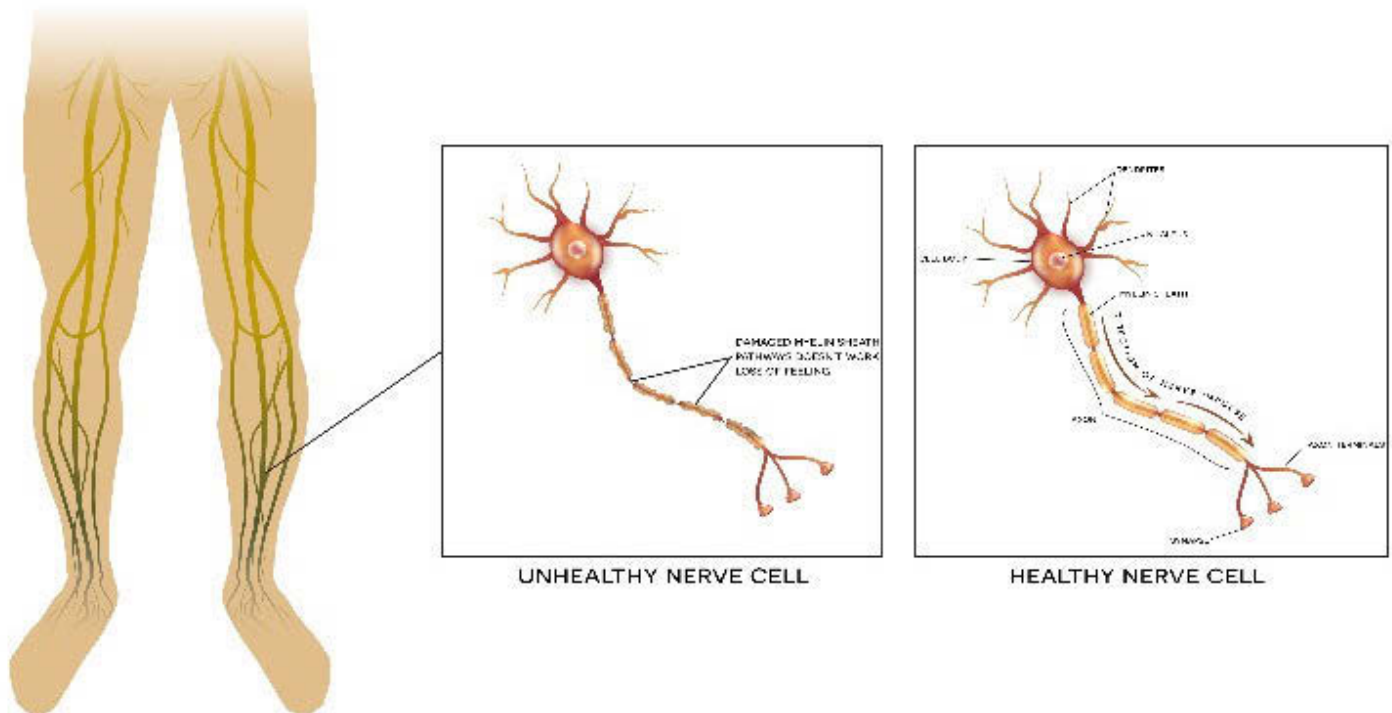
Wounds become harder to heal if injured



Tissue can be damaged or die from lack of blood flow

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

NERVE DAMAGE



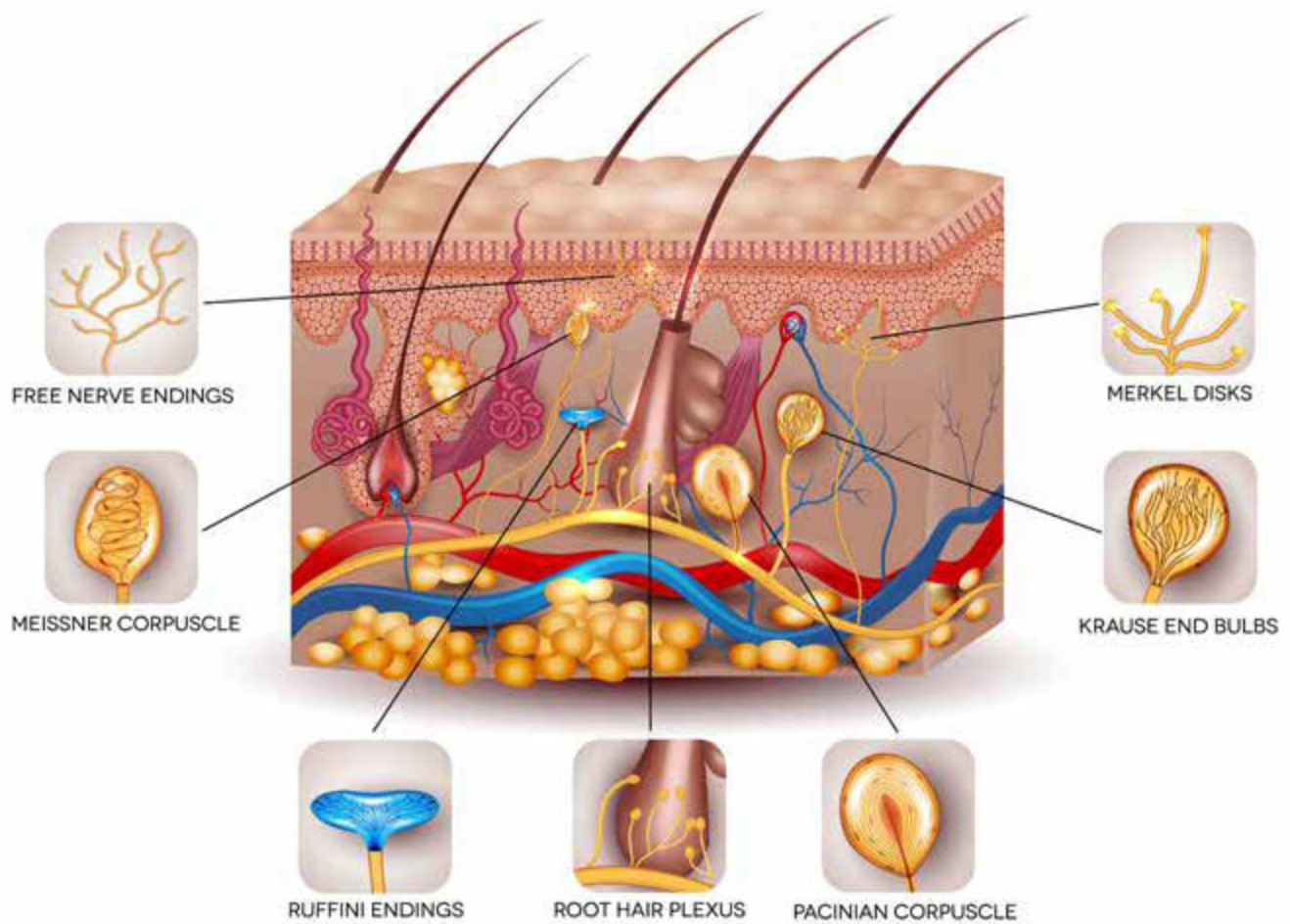
NERVE DAMAGE

Our nervous system includes the nerves which run throughout the body, sending messages back and forth to the brain and spinal cord.

In diabetes, high levels of blood glucose can damage the nerves, causing signals to become altered or blocked.

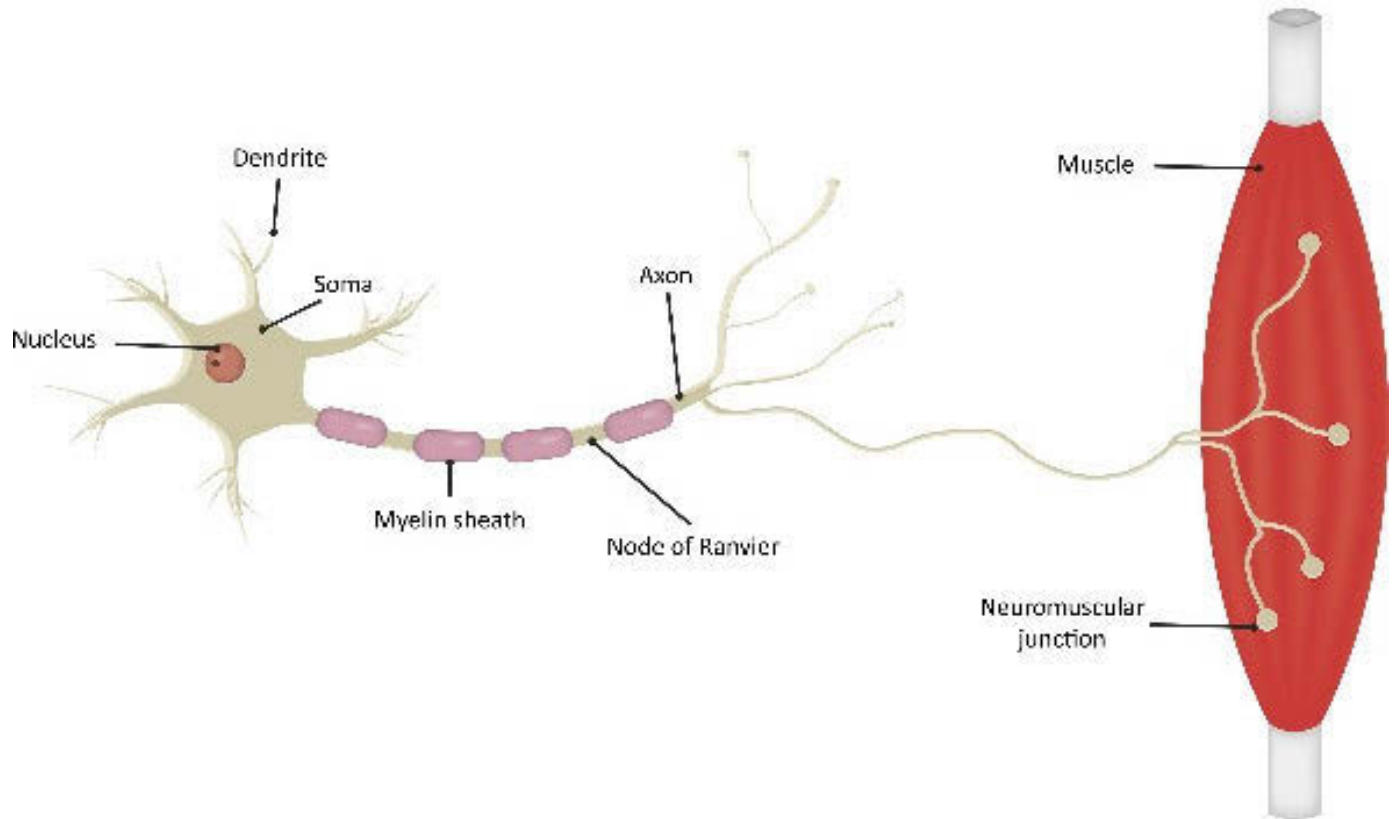
When the nerves are damaged PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY occurs.

SENSORY NERVES



Damage to **sensory nerves** causes numbness or strange feelings. As a result, injury can occur without pain, causing strange sensations that can be annoying and distressing.

MOTOR NEURON

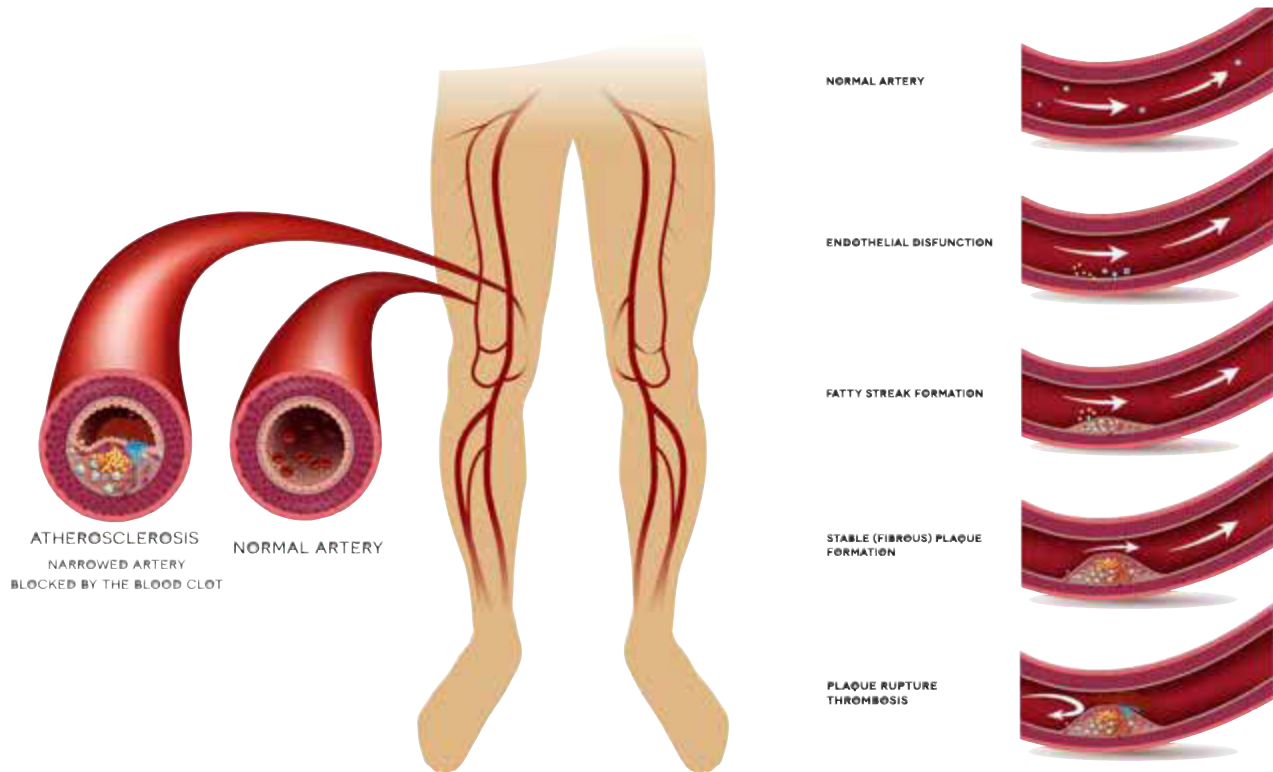


When the MOTOR NERVES are damaged muscles become weak or tight. This will affect joints movement and bone positions. There will be pressure changes when walking or standing. Deformities of the foot joints can develop.

Damaged motor nerves cause muscle weakness and tightness. The changes to the muscles will affect joint movements and bone positions, creating increased pressure points and deformities.

PERIPHERAL ARTERIAL DISEASE

ATHEROSCLEROSIS AND BLOOD CLOT



DIABETES AND CIRCULATION

The circulation system includes the heart and the blood vessels. The arteries carry oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the tissues and the veins carry the deoxygenated blood back to the heart again. High levels of blood glucose damage the blood vessels by causing plaque build up which narrows and blocks them. When a blood vessel is blocked, the tissue will not receive ideal amounts of oxygenated blood to remain healthy.

DAMAGE TO THE CIRCULATION:

- prevents the blood from reaching the muscles, skin and other tissues.
- can stop wounds from healing
- can allow infections to thrive.
- in severe circumstances, can cause tissue death and gangrene

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC COMPLICATIONS TO THE FEET



Numbness in the legs or feet



Strange feelings in the legs or feet - like insects crawling, pins and needles, tingling, burning or unexplained pain



Loss of sense of balance or sense of proprioception



Changing shape of the foot



Unusually cold feet



Unusually warm and swollen feet

SIGNS THAT CIRCULATION DAMAGE IS OCCURRING



Changes to skin appearance - shiny, loss of hair and dryness



Unusual skin colour changes – red, purple, blue or paler.



Changes to toenails - thickened, brittle and or discoloured nails



Cramping in the calf while walking



Skin temperature is too cold



Skin temperature is too warm



Cramping or burning at night in bed

Red Flags for Diabetic Feet

Red flags are what your Podiatrist and Doctor look for when screening your feet. A red flag indicates that diabetic damage is occurring and it affects the classification of your foot risk status. As the level of foot risk increases, so does the need for care and intervention to prevent serious complications.



NERVE DAMAGE = Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy



CIRCULATION DAMAGE = Diabetic Peripheral Arterial Disease



SHAPE CHANGE AND DEFORMITY = Diabetic Charcot foot



WOUNDS/ INJURY/ INFECTION = Diabetic Foot Ulcers



CARING FOR YOUR FEET

Daily self-care and inspection are an important undertaking to prevent foot problems. Podiatrists and Doctors recommend to wash, inspect feet daily and apply a moisturiser.

WHEN INSPECTING YOUR FEET LOOK FOR:

- wounds or injuries not starting to heal after two days
- unusual skin temperature
- signs of infection

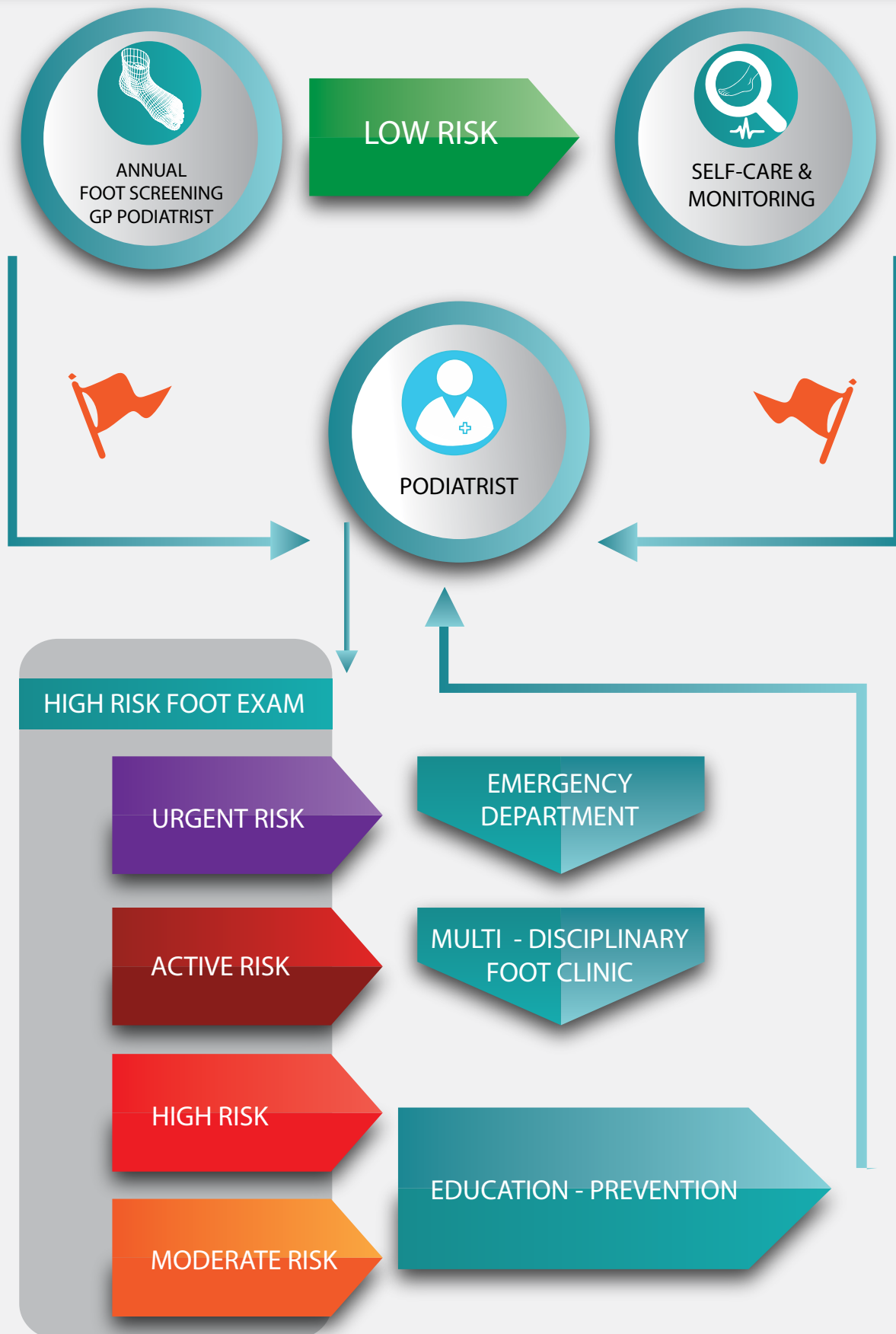
Provision of self-care such as nail cutting is safe if your foot risk status has been classified as low. If you are unable to physically to provide your own foot care, this will increase your risk of injury and you should see a Podiatrist.

When cutting your toenails, follow the natural shape of the toe. Importantly, do not cut down the sides of the nail, push back cuticles or cut a “V” into the nail. If you injure yourself while cutting your nails, clean and cover the cut immediately. If it does not begin to heal in 24- 48 hours, see your Podiatrist or Doctor.

HEALTH CARE FOR DIABETIC FEET

Every Diabetic should undergo an annual Foot Screen by a Health Professional who is either their Doctor, Podiatrist or Nurse. If the screen finds that there are no concerns and the risk status is low, an annual screening is recommended. If the foot screening shows up any red flags, a High-Risk foot examination by a podiatrist must be undertaken. The results of the high-risk foot exam will determine your foot risk status, future reviews and foot care management plan.

Diabetic Foot Care Cycle





Keeping it simple to prevent Diabetic Foot Complications

This booklet was produced by Practice Genii as a general foot education tool . Copyright 2016

The advice is general in nature and should not be used as a replacement for professional medical advice and care. People with diabetes should discuss their foot care and foot health with their Podiatrist , Doctor or other suitably qualified health professional.

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