



## LEARNING TOOLS

1. [Service Provider Resource - Summer 2017: Healthy, Happy Feet Newsletter](#)
2. [Service Provider Resource - Training Guide for Healthy, Happy Feet](#)
3. [Service Provider Resource – Healthy, Happy Feet Leadership Strategies](#)
4. [Service Provider Resource - Knowledge Check: Healthy, Happy Feet](#)
5. [Supporter Resource – Supporting People to Have Healthy, Happy Feet](#)
6. [Self-Advocate Resource – Tip Sheet #1: Choose Comfortable Shoes](#)
7. [Self-Advocate Resource – Tip Sheet #2: Healthy, Happy Feet](#)
8. [Self-Advocate Resource – Video: 5 Things to Do Every Day to Have Happy Feet\\*](#)

*\*Not available in this packet. Please visit the DDS SafetyNet to watch these videos.*

## GENERAL INFORMATION

SafetyNet Learning Tools are designed to assist in providing information on a specific topic and to be used in a variety of learning environments. These Learning Tools can be used during one-on-one conversations with an individual, or with small and larger groups.

Before beginning a learning session, the presenter should review all SafetyNet Learning Tools on the topic. The trainer can find additional material within the links provided on the SafetyNet Article and Newsletter.

## BEFORE THE TRAINING

The presenter should:

- Arrange adequate time and comfortable space for the training and discussion.
- Arrange for any equipment needed, such as a laptop and projector.
- Set up necessary equipment.
- Print or photocopy enough materials for each individual to have their own copy.

## TRAINING

The presenter:

- Shows videos.
- Leads discussion of content and encourages open communication.
- Reviews and discusses information on each of the handouts.
- Asks questions to check for understanding.
- Follows up with additional review and discussion as needed.
- Provide training in multiple sessions to assure adequate coverage and understanding of the topic.



# DDS SafetyNet

For Health, Safety, and a Better Life



## Supporting People to Have Healthy, Happy Feet

Summer 2017

### Do not ignore foot pain

Foot pain is common. About 75% of people in the United States have experienced foot pain at some point in their lives. Foot pain can keep people from doing things they enjoy. It can also be a sign of injury or illness. Learn how to prevent foot pain and help people have healthy, happy feet.

### Recognize and treat common foot problems

Foot pain may occur as a result of one of these common foot problems. A doctor should be consulted who will recommend the best treatment for each of these.

- **Bunion:** a bony bump that sticks out from the side of your foot at the base of the big toe. One in three older adults has a bunion. Bunions can cause pain, affect balance and increase the risk of falling, especially in older adults.
- **Hammertoes:** the middle toes curl downward like a claw.
- **Calluses and corns:** patches of thick, hard skin caused by constant pressure and rubbing. Moisturizing feet to keep them soft can help.
- **Flat feet:** the entire sole of the foot, including the arch, makes contact with the ground.
- **Blisters:** a bump on the skin filled with fluid. DON'T pop it. Use antibiotic cream and a bandage. Using Vaseline can help protect against blisters.

Be aware of these and other signs and symptoms of foot injury or illness. Toes that are always too cold or too hot, thickening or discoloration of toenails, swollen feet, pain in the

big toe, itchy feet, sudden or severe foot pain – these are all things that should be looked at by a doctor.

### Prevent the spread of bacteria, viruses and fungus affecting the feet

Foot and nail fungus is a skin infection caused by mold-like germs. There are more than 80 types of fungi living on your feet. Older adults and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to get them. Fungi and warts are contagious. When using a public swimming pool or shower, make sure everyone wears water shoes or flip flops to protect feet from water that may carry these bacteria or fungi.

- **Athlete's foot:** the most common type of foot fungus. Symptoms include burning, itching, redness, and peeling of feet.
- **Nail fungus:** can enter the toe nail through a crack or break and can cause nails to become brittle, thick, and discolored.
- **Warts:** rough, grainy growths on the skin caused by a virus.

### Provide extra care and attention for diabetics

People with diabetes need to take special care to protect feet from injury. Diabetes may cause loss of feeling in the feet, making it hard to know if the person is injured. People with diabetes should take these additional steps to keep their feet happy and healthy.

- Check feet every day for blisters, cuts, scratches, or any break in the skin. Immediately treat any injury.
- Never take the risk of walking barefoot.
- Talk to the doctor about things to do to reduce risk. Make sure the doctor checks



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## Healthy, Happy Feet - continued

their feet at every visit. Sixty-six percent of adults with diabetes in California report receiving an annual foot exam.

### Five steps to help support healthy, happy feet

#### 1. **Keep feet clean.**

A part of personal care everyday should be washing feet in warm, soapy water. Wash under the feet and between the toes, using a mild bar soap with a moisturizer so as not to dry skin.



#### 2. **Gently dry – don't rub – feet.** Whether independently or with support, individuals should dry their feet, especially between the toes. Moisture between the toes can cause an infection or Athlete's foot.

#### 3. **Emphasize the importance of keeping the skin soft** to prevent calluses and cracks. After washing and drying feet, it's helpful to apply a moisturizing skin cream by rubbing it gently into skin. Do not put cream between toes. Do not use perfumed lotions which can irritate skin.

#### 4. **Change socks every day.** Cotton or wool socks breathe and help keep feet dry. Dirty socks cause foot odor and other problems.

#### 5. **Check toenails.** Make sure they are trimmed straight across and not too short. Use a nail clipper, not scissors. Do not use a sharp pointed file or anything that might break the skin. If toenails need extra cleaning, a soft brush works well. Make sure staff are well trained in trimming or, if possible, make an appointment with a podiatrist.

### Buy comfortable shoes

**Wearing shoes that fit** is a must. Make sure there is plenty of room for toes to move.

Encourage individuals to choose comfort over style! Pointy shoes will likely cause calluses and pain. Do not get high heels. They are not safe and can create serious foot problems.

When staff are assisting someone who is shopping for shoes, **make sure that feet are measured.** A rule of thumb is to wear the socks that are usually worn with that type of shoe. Remember, feet swell as the day goes on. Shop at the end of the day for a better fit.

Encourage staff and individuals to **buy shoes that are made of comfortable, supportive materials.** Soft leather is good. Breathable tennis (athletic) shoes are good. Thick-soled shoes can help cushion feet when walking on a hard surface. Plastic shoes may cause blisters and other problems. Always go for comfort!

**Protect feet and choose shoes with support or protection.** Encourage staff and the individuals you support to stay away from wearing flip flops on a regular basis. Flip flops or sandals that make you curl your toes to keep them on may cause serious foot pain. Shoes without support or protection can mean misery!

### Follow additional foot care tips

- Take calcium and vitamin D to help build strong bones.
- Participate in regular weight bearing exercise. Walk 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes.
- Take tai chi or do yoga.
- Work on balance to prevent falls. Falls can cause injury to feet, hips, and elsewhere.

### Make foot care a priority every day!

Use this article and materials in the Happy Feet content package [<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/all-about-foot-care>] to support pain-free feet - yours and the people you support.



## Training Guide for Healthy, Happy Feet

Summer 2017

**Summary:** A foot without pain is a happy foot. Happy feet are important to feeling good and staying active. Foot pain can keep a person from doing things they enjoy. It can also be a sign of injury or illness. Do not ignore foot pain. It is not normal. Learn what to do to prevent foot pain and how to best help people to have healthy, happy feet. This training packet will focus on the **5 everyday steps to keep feet healthy.**

**Goals:** At the end of this class, participants should be able to:

- Understand the importance of healthy feet.
- Describe the **5 everyday steps to keep feet healthy.**
  - **Keep feet clean.**
  - **Gently dry – don't rub – feet.**
  - **Keep the skin on feet soft to prevent calluses and cracks.**
  - **Change socks every day.**
  - **Check toenails.**
- Identify common foot problems that require a doctor's appointment.

**Materials Needed** Depending on the method of presentation you select, you will need:

### Physical Materials:

- Chart or poster paper
- Markers
- Handouts
- Equipment to show materials on TV or monitor

### Provider Materials:

- Healthy, Happy Feet Newsletter - Supporting People to Have Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/healthy-happy-feet-newsletter-supporting-people-have-healthy-happy-feet>
- Healthy, Happy Feet Leadership Strategies — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/healthy-happy-feet-leadership-strategies>
- Training Guide for Healthy, Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/training-guide-healthy-happy-feet>

### Supporter Materials:

- Supporter Article - Supporting People to Have Healthy, Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/supporter-article-supporting-people-have-healthy-happy-feet>
- Knowledge Check - Healthy, Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/knowledge-check-healthy-happy-feet>



## Training Guide - continued

### Tools for Individuals:

- Tip Sheet #1 - Choose Comfortable Shoes — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/tip-sheet-choose-comfortable-shoes-0>
- Tip Sheet #2 - Healthy, Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/tip-sheet-healthy-happy-feet>
- Happy Feet Video - Five Things to Do Every Day to Have Happy Feet — <http://ddssafety.net/node/995>

### Preparation:

Review all SafetyNet materials listed on the previous page. In addition, managers, trainers, and administrators should review the Healthy, Happy Feet Leadership Strategies. Depending on the method or presentation you choose:

- Set-up equipment for presentation
- Print out/photocopy Supporter and Individual materials
- Print out/photocopy Knowledge Check

### Presentation:

There are many ways to present this material, including:

- **Print the Supporter and Individual materials** and go through them as a group discussion. End the session with the Knowledge Check and a discussion of the answers.
- **Use a computer and a projector**, TV monitor, or monitor with an internet connection to show **Supporter and Individual materials** (either downloaded onto your computer or directly on the website). End the session with the Knowledge Check and a discussion of the answers.
- **Print the Supporter and Individual materials as handouts for self-study**. Each participant then completes the Knowledge Check and discusses answers with other staff as a group.

### Suggested Activities for Sessions on Foot Care:

- Ask staff to read the supporter article before you meet to talk about foot care. Discuss the general topics in the article by topic heading (e.g., Recognize and Treat Common Foot Problems). List the major points of discussion on flip chart.
- Review the 5 steps in Everyday Foot Care.
- Discuss the foot care needs of the individuals you support and list them on chart paper. Discuss the list and reflect on whether additional support is needed, including a referral to a podiatrist.
- Ask if there are unmet foot care needs (e.g., bunions, calluses) with individuals. List for later reference.
- Ask if staff have training needs about foot care management and treatment.



## Training Guide - continued

- Consider a demonstration of washing, drying, moisturizing feet using an individual you support or a staff member volunteer.
  - 1) Demonstrate how to soak feet in warm water for at least 5 minutes, then wash with soap. Why? Soaking will soften the toenails and make them easier to trim.
  - 2) Demonstrate how to gently push nail cuticle back (from toes) with cuticle or orange stick to prevent hangnails. Note: A clean washcloth can be used for this step. DSP can demonstrate these steps on his or her own finger or toe nails.
  - 3) Demonstrate how to clean under the toe nails with orange stick or tool on nail clipper for this purpose.
  - 4) Demonstrate how to change the water and wash, rinse, and dry feet. Note: Do not rinse in soapy water. Why? Soapy water has many germs from the nails. This will prevent skin on the hands and feet from chapping.
  - 5) Demonstrate how to use nail clippers or nail scissors to trim toenails straight across. Fingernails can be trimmed with a slight curve. Use an emery board or nail file to shape and smooth the nails. Note: Individuals with diabetes need professional assistance for nail care.
  - 6) Collect and distribute foot care information from local podiatrist, Kaiser or other health care system in your area.
- Hand out the Knowledge Check at the end of your session on Foot Care. Ask participants to complete, but mention it will not be scored. Once completed, discuss the answers as a group. Review materials as needed.



## Healthy, Happy Feet Leadership Strategies

Summer 2017

As an administrator or manager of Direct Support Professionals, here are some tips and examples of management strategies that can support proactive foot care.

### **Discuss Common Foot Problems**

1. Discuss common foot problems and how to determine if a doctor's care is needed.
2. Discuss the prevalence of foot bacteria, fungus and viruses, and methods of prevention.
3. Are these common problems among the individuals you support?

### **Assess the Foot Care Needs of the Individuals You Support**

1. Review the health profiles of individuals to flag and summarize any outstanding foot care problems.
2. Ask staff for additional information about foot care issues that they have noted.
3. Develop a foot care profile on each individual as needed.
4. Where appropriate, add foot care to health care log systems.

### **Demonstrate Foot Care Practices to Staff**

1. With their consent, use staff or individuals you support to demonstrate proper foot care practices. (see training guide)

### **Some Examples of Foot Care Leadership Strategies**

1. Treat staff as professional equals. Accept staff ideas about how to prevent foot problems among the individuals that they serve.
2. Avoid a top-down approach to training. The top-down approach fails to take advantage of the fact that staff know the people they serve and can offer insight.
3. Do not rely on exclusively on training or re-training. Relying on training alone assumes that staff are not well-enough trained. If problems exist, it may be an organizational problem.
4. Solicit feedback on your training methods.



## **Knowledge Check:**

### **Healthy, Happy Feet**

**1. Name 4 common foot problems:**

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**2. Name the 5 steps of every day foot care:**

**3. What are some special foot care precautions to take with people who have diabetes?**





## Answers

1. Name 4 common foot problems:

**Athletes foot, bunions, corns, blisters, hammertoes, flat feet**

2. Name the 5 steps of every day foot care:

1. Keep feet clean.
2. Gently dry – don't rub – feet.
3. Keep the skin soft, moisturize.
4. Change socks every day.
5. Check toenails.

**3. What are some special foot care precautions to take with people who have diabetes?**

People with diabetes need to take special care to protect feet from injury. Diabetes may cause loss of feeling in the feet, making it hard to know if the person is injured. Diabetes slows the healing process, increasing the possibility for infection. People with diabetes should take these additional steps to keep their feet happy and healthy.

- Check feet every day for blisters, cuts, scratches, any break in the skin. Immediately treat any injury.
- Never take the risk of walking barefoot.
- Talk to the doctor about things to do to reduce risk. Make sure the doctor checks their feet at every visit.



SafetyNet: Summer 2017

## Supporting People to Have Healthy, Happy Feet

### Index

*Do not ignore foot pain*

*Recognize and treat common foot problems*

*Prevent the spread of bacteria, viruses and fungus affecting the feet*

*Provide extra care and attention for diabetics*

*Five everyday steps for supporters*

*Wear comfortable shoes*

*Eat right and exercise*

*Make foot care a priority today and every day!*

*Resources*

### Do not ignore foot pain

A foot without pain is an important part of feeling good and staying active. Foot pain can keep a person from doing things they enjoy. It can also be a sign of injury or illness. Do not ignore foot pain. It is not normal. Learn what to do to prevent foot pain and how to best support people to have happy, healthy feet.



### Recognize and treat common foot problems

If someone is having pain, it may be a result of one of these common foot problems. A doctor should evaluate and recommend the best treatment for each of these.

- A **bunion** is a bony bump that sticks out from the side of your foot at the base of the big toe. One in three older adults has a bunion. Bunions can cause pain, affect balance and increase the risk of falling, especially in older adults.
- **Hammertoes** occur when the middle toes begin to curl downward.
- **Calluses and corns** are patches of thick, hard skin caused by constant pressure and rubbing. Moisturizing feet to keep them soft



and supple can help.

- If an individual has **flat feet**, the entire sole of the foot makes contact with the ground.
- If an individual gets a **blister**, DON'T pop it. Use antibiotic cream and a bandage. Using Vaseline can help protect against blisters.

Be aware of these and other signs and symptoms of foot injury or illness. Toes that are always too cold or too hot, thickening or discoloration of toenails, swollen feet, pain in the big toe, itchy feet, sudden or severe foot pain – these are all things that should be evaluated by a doctor.

### **Prevent the spread of bacteria, viruses and fungus affecting the feet**

When using a public swimming pool or shower, make sure everyone wears water shoes or flip flops to protect feet from water that may carry these bacteria or fungi.

- Athlete's foot is a virus. Symptoms include burning, itching, redness, and peeling of feet.
- Warts are rough, grainy growths on the skin.
- Nail fungus, which can enter the toe nail through a crack or break, can cause nails to become brittle, thick, and discolored.

### **Provide extra care and attention for diabetics**

People with diabetes need to take special care to protect feet from injury. Diabetes can cause loss of feeling in the feet, making it hard to know if the person is injured. Diabetes slows the healing process, increasing the possibility for infection. People with diabetes should be supported to take these additional steps to keep their feet happy and healthy.

- Check feet every day for blisters, cuts, scratches or any break in the skin. Immediately treat any injury.
- Never take the risk of walking barefoot.



- Talk to the doctor about things to do to reduce risk. Make sure the doctor checks their feet at every visit.

### Five everyday steps for supporters

- **Keep feet clean.** Every day, make sure that part of personal care is to wash feet in warm soapy water. Wash the underside of the feet and between the toes. Use a mild soap with a moisturizer like aloe vera, vitamin E or sweet almond so as not to dry skin.
- **Gently dry – don't rub – feet.** Support individuals to dry between the toes. Moisture, especially between the toes, may cause an infection or help fungus, like Athlete's foot, to grow.
- **Keep the skin on feet soft to prevent calluses and cracks.** After washing and drying feet, use a moisturizing skin cream. Rub gently into skin. Do not put cream between toes. Do not use perfumed lotions on feet as they can irritate skin.
- **Change socks every day.** The best socks are soft and cushioned. Cotton or wool socks breathe and help to keep feet dry. Polyester or nylon socks are not as good. Dirty socks can cause foot odor and other problems.
- **Check toenails.** Make sure they are properly trimmed – straight across and not too short. Use a nail clipper, not scissors. Do not use a sharp pointed file or anything that might break the skin to clean around the nail. If toenails need extra cleaning, a soft brush works well. You may also need to schedule an appointment with a podiatrist if you are unsure about caring for toenails for the people you support.



### Wear comfortable shoes

- **Wearing shoes that fit is a must for healthy feet.** When supporting individuals in buying shoes, make sure there is plenty of room for toes to move. Pointy shoes will likely cause calluses and pain. Do not get





high heels as they are not safe and can create serious foot problems. Choose comfort over the latest style!

- If you are supporting individuals in purchasing shoes, **make sure to have feet measured**. Ask the person to wear the socks he or she will wear with the shoes. Be aware that feet swell as the day goes on. Shop at the end of the day for a better fit.
- **Buy shoes that are made of comfortable, supportive materials**. Soft leather is good. Breathable tennis (athletic) shoes are good. Thick soled shoes can help cushion feet when walking on a hard surface. Do not buy plastic shoes. They may cause blisters and other problems. Always go for comfort!
- **Protect feet**. You and the people you support should not wear flip flops on a regular basis. Flip flops or sandals can make you curl your toes to keep them on and that may cause serious foot pain. Shoes without support or protection can mean misery!



### Eat right and exercise

Having healthy feet also means eating right and exercising. Encourage individuals to:

- Eat foods high in vitamin D to build strong bones.
- Do weight bearing exercises regularly. Walk 5 times a week for at least 30 minutes.
- Work on balance to prevent falls. Falls can cause injury to feet, hips, and elsewhere. Try tai chi, yoga, or other exercises to strengthen muscles.

### Make foot care a priority today and every day!

Use this article and materials in the Healthy, Happy Feet content package [<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care>] to learn how to keep feet pain free - yours and the people you support.



## Resources

### Supporter Materials:

- Supporter Article – Supporting People to Have Healthy, Happy Feet  
<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/supporter-article-supporting-people-have-healthy-happy-feet>
- Knowledge Check – Healthy, Happy Feet  
<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/knowledge-check-healthy-happy-feet>

### Tools for Individuals:

- Tip Sheet #1 – Choose Comfortable Shoes  
<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/tip-sheet-choose-comfortable-shoes-0>
- Tip Sheet #2 – Healthy, Happy Feet  
<http://ddssafety.net/health/foot-care/tip-sheet-healthy-happy-feet>
- Happy Feet Video – Five Things to Do Every Day to Have Happy Feet  
<http://ddssafety.net/node/995>

**For additional information on recognizing and treating common foot problems, go to:**

- WebMD Foot Care Health Center: <http://www.webmd.boots.com/foot-care/default.htm>



## Tip Sheet - Choose Comfortable Shoes

Summer 2017

**Always wear comfortable shoes. Wearing shoes that fit is a must for a happy you – and happy feet.**

✓ **ALWAYS go for comfort -**

- Do not get shoes that are too tight. Make sure there is plenty of room for toes to move.
- Pointy shoes that squeeze toes will cause calluses and pain.
- Do not get high heels as they are not safe. High heels can make you fall. They can cause serious foot problems.
- Choose comfort over the latest style!

✓ **Shop smart for shoes -**

- Have feet measured before you try on shoes.
- Wear the socks you will wear with the shoes.
- Shop at the end of the day for a better fit. Feet swell as the day goes on.
- If shoes hurt when you first try them on, don't buy them!



✓ **Buy shoes that are made of comfortable, supportive materials -**

- Soft leather is a good material.
- Breathable tennis (athletic) shoes are good too.
- Thick-soled shoes can help cushion feet when walking on a hard surface.
- Do not buy plastic shoes. They may cause blisters and other problems.

✓ **Protect your feet -**

- Do not wear flip flops on a regular basis. They do not provide protection or support and can cause injury.
- Flip flops or sandals make you curl your toes to keep them on. Over time, this can cause serious foot pain.
- Don't go barefoot, especially if you have diabetes.





### Five Things To Do Everyday to Have Happy Feet

A foot without pain is a happy, healthy foot. Foot pain can keep you from doing things that you like to do. Foot pain can also mean that you are sick or have an injury. Do not ignore foot pain. It is not normal. **Learn and practice these five steps – everyday – for happy feet.**



1. **Keep feet clean.** Everyday, wash feet in warm soapy water. Wash the underside of the feet and between the toes. Use a mild bar soap with a moisturizer like aloe vera, vitamin E or sweet almond so as not to dry skin.

2. **Gently dry – don't rub – feet.** Dry between the toes. Moisture, especially between the toes, may cause an infection or help fungus, like Athlete's foot, to grow.
3. **Keep the skin on feet soft to prevent calluses and cracks.** After washing and drying feet, apply a moisturizing skin cream. Rub gently into skin. Do not put cream between toes. Do not use perfumed lotions on feet as they can irritate skin.
4. **Change socks every day.** The best socks are soft and cushioned. Cotton or wool socks breathe and help to keep feet dry. Polyester or nylon socks are not as good. Dirty socks can cause foot odor and other problems.
5. **Check toenails.** Make sure they are properly trimmed – straight across and not too short. Use a nail clipper, not scissors. Do not use a sharp pointed file or anything that might break the skin to clean around the nail. If toenails need extra cleaning, a soft brush works well.

