

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Important reminder for people with diabetes to check the health of their feet

The 1.7 million Australians living with diabetes are reminded to regularly check the health of their feet during National Amputee Week (4–11 October) to curb the frightening statistic that a limb will be lost as a direct result of diabetes-related foot disease every three hours in Australia.

The latest statistics show that only 18 per cent of Australians with diabetes had Medicare claims for a completed annual cycle of care, meaning that over 80 per cent of Australians with the condition may not have their feet checked regularly.

“Diabetes is a major cause of amputation and about 875 Victorians will lose a limb due to diabetes complications each year. We recommend that people with all types of diabetes have their feet checked twice a year by their doctor or diabetes health professional and get medical advice early if they notice any changes or problems,” said Diabetes Australia – Vic CEO Craig Bennett.

Damage to the nerves and the blood supply in the feet caused by diabetes can put feet at risk of damage. The damage is more likely if you have lived with diabetes for a long time, if your blood glucose levels have been too high for too long, if you smoke, or are inactive.

Reg Monash is 83 years old and has lived with type 2 diabetes for 25 years. He was a fit electrical tradesman when diagnosed, but had a family history of diabetes. Reg developed peripheral neuropathy in both legs, which was a complication of his diabetes and he has since had three toes amputated.

“I very strongly recommend that people with diabetes commit themselves to work with specialists like podiatrists who can closely monitor their health. You never know what is around the corner, so I think it is vital to keep up-to-date with my diabetes education and see my specialists regularly,” Reg said.

Once a person with diabetes has had their initial amputation, the risk of further amputations is very high.

More information on diabetes, foot health tips and how to locate your nearest podiatrist with diabetes expertise, can be found on the Diabetes Australia fact sheet: http://www.diabetesvic.org.au/images/stories/Diabetes_and_feet_2012.pdf

[Diabetes Australia – Vic](http://www.diabetesvic.org.au) is the leading charity and peak consumer body working to reduce the impact of diabetes.

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