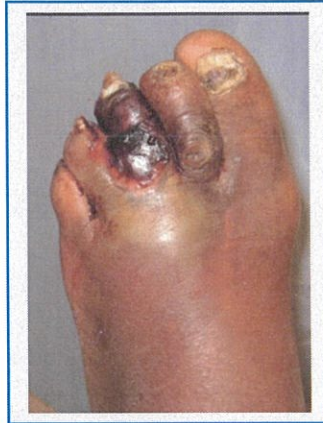


DIABETES COMPLICATIONS-Leg and foot complications



Diabetes has two major effects on the legs and feet.

A. Effects of blocking the larger arteries supplying the foot.

1. This causes the tissue to lose blood supply which means less nutrients, less Oxygen and reduced ability of the immune system to send white blood cells (macrophages) to protect the foot.
2. Due to the lack of blood flow, wounds take longer to heal and the chance of infection in the foot is higher than in non-diabetic patients.
3. If the arteries become totally blocked, the tissue dies and gangrene sets in.
4. Once gangrene has set in the only solution is to amputate the leg or foot.

B. Blocking the small arteries that supply the nerves to the foot.

1. Blocking the small arteries that supply the nerves (Vasa Nervorum) causes the nerves to slowly die down.
2. This starts with pain and burning in the foot and eventually total numbness of the foot.
3. This numbness then leads to an increased chance of injury and wounds, which in turn takes longer to heal and is also more prone to infections.

Prevention of Diabetic foot complications.

1. **Control the blood sugar**- this is the single most important preventative measure.
2. Clean **and dry** your feet daily.
3. Inspect your feet daily for cuts and wounds.
4. Seek early medical care if a wound is found.
5. Protect your feet by well-fitting and protective shoes.
6. **Do not walk barefoot!**

Dr Francois Le Roux

Company Medical Doctor

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