

Foot ulcers

Ulcers occur most often on the ball of the foot or on the bottom of the big toe. Ulcers on the sides of the foot are usually due to poorly fitting shoes. Remember, even though some ulcers do not hurt, every ulcer should be seen by your doctor right away. Neglecting ulcers can result in infections, which in turn can lead to loss of a limb

What your doctor will do varies with your ulcer. Your doctor may need to take x-rays of your foot to make sure the bone is not infected. The ulcer may also need to have any dead and infected tissue cleaned out. You may need to go into the hospital for this cleaning. Also, a culture of the wound may be used to find out what type of infection you have and which antibiotic will work best

Keeping off your feet is very important. Walking on an ulcer can enlarge it and force the infection deeper into your foot. Your doctor may put a special shoe, brace, or cast on your foot to protect it

If your ulcer is not healing and your circulation is poor, you may be referred to a vascular surgeon. Managing diabetes is important since high blood glucose (blood sugar) levels make it hard to fight infection

After a foot ulcer heals, treat your foot carefully. Scar tissue from the wound will break down easily. You may need to wear special shoes after the ulcer is healed to protect this area and to prevent the ulcer from returning