

DIABETIC SHOES AND INSERTS  
USE & CARE INSTRUCTIONS

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These instructions are intended to help ensure successful use of your Therapeutic Shoes and Inserts, also called Extra-depth or Diabetic Shoes and Total Contact Inserts. Total Contact Inserts are special type foot orthosis (FO) which utilizes a combination of materials of varying densities to redistribute pressure on the bottom of the foot in order to help reduce the risk of skin breakdown. They are accommodative devices, not corrective. Diabetic Shoes are deeper than a normal shoe in order to accommodate the thickness of the Inserts, and will typically have smoother interior surfaces, and softer uppers. Together they are a critical part your doctor's treatment plan to support and protect your feet. Please read and follow these instructions carefully.

While being fitted with your inserts, your Orthotist will instruct you on how to wear and use them effectively. Some points to remember:

SOCKS

1. Always wear clean, medium weight socks with your Shoes and Inserts.
  - a. If applicable continue to wear your physician-prescribed diabetic socks, or compression socks
2. Pull sock up to smooth out all wrinkles, making sure that they have not been pulled too tightly over your toes, forcing your toes to curl. Toes should feel free to move.

SHOES

1. The Inserts should always be worn with Extra-Depth Diabetic Shoes. It is recommended that they only be worn only with the shoes that you received with your inserts.
2. We understand that being limited to one pair of shoes, one style/design may not meet all your needs for the year. Here are our recommendations if you must obtain shoes that were not provided by us as part of your health benefit.
  - a. Obtain another pair of shoes from us, as "self-pay". They will not be covered under your insurance, but you can be assured that you are fit appropriately.
  - b. If looking elsewhere: look for Extra-depth Shoes with removable insoles that provide at least 3/16" of added depth in the shoe once removed, a high/full toe box to avoid pressure on the tops of the toes, and adjustable closures (laces or velcro).
  - c. If your shoes need to have modifications to the sole (lifts or wedges), look for soles made of a solid material (no air or gel soles). Notify the sales clerk/manager of your needs as they may have suggestions. Make sure to get their permission in advance to return the shoes if, after our inspection, we find that we are not able to modify the sole materials. Get a name and save your receipt.

WEAR: BREAK-IN AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. Slide the inserts into your shoe, confirming that each insert is in the correct shoe.

- a. Push the toe to the end of the shoe, press the heel in, then slide it back firmly against the heel counter.
  - b. Inspect that the inserts are lying flat and smooth within the shoe.
  - c. Don your shoes in the normal fashion using a shoe horn if needed. Confirm that your foot is positioned properly in the shoe (your heel is firmly against the heel counter) then secure the laces/velcro making sure they are comfortably snug through the midfoot to secure your feet to the inserts without movement of the foot within the shoe.
2. It is important for everyone to watch for warning signs of ill-fitting shoes and inserts. It is especially critical for people with diabetes, neuropathy and poor sensation to vigilantly follow these fundamentals;
- a. Break them in by wearing them around your home, 1-2 hours at a time, a few times per day, for the first few days.
  - b. Every time you remove your shoes and inserts it is vital to check your skin for redness, blisters or pressure points. Use a hand mirror in order to inspect all surfaces of your foot – the back of the heel, bottom/plantar and outside/lateral surfaces can be tricky.
    - i. Lightly reddened (pink) areas that fade within 20 minutes, should be monitored closely during the break-in process. Continue limit wear, but do not increase wearing time until it resolves.
    - ii. If you see reddened areas that do not fade quickly, or develop skin breakdown (including blisters) discontinue use and contact our office immediately.
    - iii. If the skin check is all clear, you may gently increase wear time by 1-2 hours (still wearing them just a few times per day) until you are up to a full-time daily wear in 10-14 days.
3. Three set of inserts are usually provided (per Medicare guidelines) and should they be rotated over the course of the year, as instructed by your Orthotist or Podiatrist. Commonly they are rotated monthly, allowing for them to rest/rebound for two months, before their spot in the rotation comes up again. Or, each set is worn for four months before it is discontinued in favor of the next set.
4. Your shoes and inserts should be replaced yearly as the materials will have lost their ability to cushion and protect at that point.

#### FOLLOW-UP

1. The Orthotist will discuss the follow-up plan with you at delivery.
2. Initial follow-up is important to confirm that the device is fitting and functioning as ordered.
3. We recommend regular follow-up with your practitioner to assess the effectiveness of your current inserts.
  - a. We encourage you to call immediately if you notice a decrease in the performance of your device, or any changes in your skin (callus, blister or other breakdown).
  - b. It is recommended that you see your Orthotist annually, and continue to see your podiatrist regularly as part of a long-term plan to maintain your foot health.

4. All modifications to the shoes and inserts should be performed by the Orthotist. Do not attempt to repair or adjust your inserts yourself.

#### CARE AND CLEANING

1. The orthosis may be gently wiped clean (inside and out) with a soft cloth using water and a mild detergent. Do not scrub with anything abrasive. Rinse thoroughly and towel dry. It can be immediately placed back into your shoe and worn.
2. Do not launder, soak, or place in a dishwasher
3. Avoid all heat sources, as they can damage or deform the device. Do not place near a heater to dry. Do not leave in the car.

*Compliance with instructions and follow-up appointments is very important.* At your follow-up appointment your Orthotist will make any necessary 'fine-tuning' adjustments to optimize your comfort and function. This is a normal part of the process.

Your foot health and comfort are very important to us. Please contact our office at (410)-321-6844 if you have any question or concerns about your shoes and inserts.