

Your treatment journey

My diagnosis

Your GP will likely be your first port of call, who might refer you to a podiatrist. You may receive your diagnosis from the following members of your team of **health care professionals (HCPs)**. You will be told what type of **diabetic foot ulcer (DFU)** you have and below we have outlined how this will impact the next steps of your journey.

KEY HCPS

GP
Your most common point of contact for health queries.

Specialist woundcare nurse
They are a specialist in hard-to-heal wounds and ulcers, so may carry out your treatment.

Podiatrist
They will complete an assessment of your blood supply and level of sensation to create the best treatment plan for you.

Endocrinologist or diabetologist
They may run blood tests and look for any other potential concerns, like nutritional deficiencies.

DIAGNOSIS

When you are first diagnosed, you may be told you have a specific type of **DFU** – such as neuropathic or ischemic. Your healthcare professional will be able to tell you more about what this means and what your treatment plan might look like.

Additional support

Healing and closure of your wound is possible, and trying to stay positive throughout the journey – even the tougher parts – is key to this. So your diagnosis and care plan should bear in mind the way a **DFU** can impact mental health.

Your healthcare professional will consider how your **DFU** might interact with any existing mental health conditions you might be living with or treatment you receive, and help foster a positive approach.

My care plan

Once you and your **HCP** team have gone through this process you will eventually form a care plan. Typically there are three outcomes:

DETERIORATING

Wound continues to worsen
If your **DFU** continues to deteriorate you may require further intervention, referral to specialised vascular or surgical services.

HEALING

Manage wound
Your **DFU** may be re-assessed regularly to identify any change.

You will be asked to take an active role in your care to try and progress towards healing.

HEALED

Positive outcome
Your **HCP** will work with you by providing you with support and education to reduce your risk of developing a **DFU** again in the future.



DFU Click abbreviations
HCP to view their meanings

Wound Hygiene

ASSESSMENT

Wound
Your **DFU** will be examined so that the **HCP** can grade your wound to understand how to treat it best. They will also be checking for any signs of infection.

You
Your **HCP** will want to understand your lifestyle and risk factors and so may ask you some more general questions about you and your health.

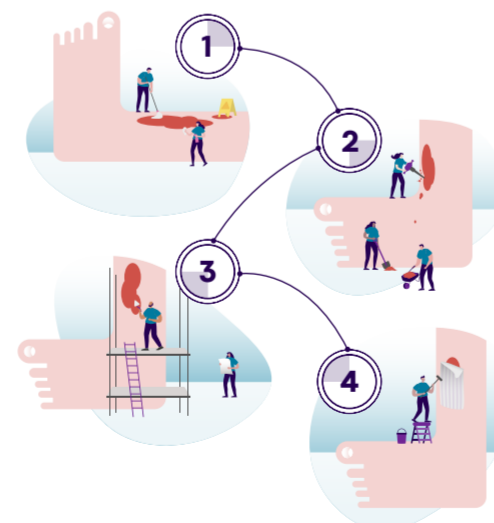
Surrounding skin
Your wound environment is assessed to ensure adequate blood flow to the area to encourage healing.

Plans
Your **HCP** might suggest other things to try – such as insoles or nutrition – to treat any underlying causes of your **DFU**.

Your **HCP** will help you organise any referrals needed and map out your plan towards healing.

MANAGEMENT

When your **HCP** dresses or re-dresses your wound they will adopt a protocol of care that may be called **Wound Hygiene**. This is made up of four steps that will give your wound the best chance of healing:



1. Cleanse
To clean the wound and the surrounding skin.

2. Debride
To remove any unwanted wound debris from the wound surface, that could harbour bacteria.

3. Refashion
To remove any unwanted wound debris from around the wound edge, that could harbour bacteria.

4. Dress
It will may be an antimicrobial dressing that can help manage bacteria and signs of infection.

Steps 2 & 3 aim to remove bacteria and may cause some bleeding, this can help to stimulate growth factors and kick start the healing process.

MONITORING

Tracking changes
After your **DFU** has been redressed various factors will be monitored by your **HCP** to make sure you are progressing towards healing. Such as:

- Wound size and presence
- Wound bed tissue composition
- Health of wound edge
- Surrounding skin condition, and changes
- Wound odour.

Covering all aspects
Your **HCP** will also be monitoring other aspects that may affect the healing of your **DFU**. They'll be interested in blood sugar levels and nutrition as well as other elements that may be affecting your quality of life, such as:

- Pain
- Sleep
- Appetite
- Impact of wound odour
- Mobility.

The process is repeated until a conclusion is reached