

## DIABETES-RELATED AMPUTATIONS UP

# Sugar? Watch foot

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Diabetes-related foot ailments, which often involve amputation, are on the rise in the city.

According to doctors, more than 50 per cent of foot amputations in the city are related to diabetes and the figure is increasing by the year with the rise in the number of diabetic cases.

Foot ailments, especially ulcer and gangrene, are the most common complications affecting diabetic patients.

Diabetes causes nerve damage (neuropathy) and also induces poor blood circulation, making patients prone to foot problems, said Sudip Chatterjee, endocrinologist, Park Clinic.

“High glucose level in blood deteriorates the patient’s ability to fight infection. Besides, poor blood circulation results in poor healing and also causes damage to foot nerves, reducing the patient’s ability to respond to pain,” explained Chatterjee.

People with diabetes need to be “proac-

### Factors leading to leg loss

- Reduced blood supply to lower limbs due to peripheral vascular disease
- Delayed healing of ulcer and infections
- Loss of sensation because of damaged nerves

tive” and take immediate action if they notice any small cut, ulcer or deformity in the feet, said Arun Bal, president, Diabetic Foot Society of India.

“The ulcer can be cured if detected early and treated properly. A major part of the treatment is to prevent the patient from bearing weight on the affected foot. Because the patient feels no pain, he keeps walking and the wound deteriorates,” Bal added.

According to Arindam Sarkar, reconstructive surgeon at SSKM and AMRI hospitals, most patients tend to neglect foot infection in early

stages. “The main artery in the leg becomes narrow because of diabetes, resulting in gangrene. If the condition is allowed to sustain for a week, the leg may need to be amputated,” Sarkar said.

Experts said foot amputation can be avoided in 50 per cent of the cases, if good foot care — exercise, use of proper footwear and prevention of fungal infection — could be arranged.