

# Latest news: Skin tone variations and foot care, and digital eye screening in the community

Stay abreast of the latest news that could impact diabetes nursing.

## Improving diabetes foot care for people with dark skin tones

Diabetes Africa has produced a handbook for healthcare professionals to improve foot care for people with dark skin tone living with diabetes. *Diabetes Footcare in Dark Skin Tones* was written by experts from a range of professional backgrounds, including diabetes, tissue viability and podiatry.

Diabetes leads to nearly 10 000 amputations a year in the UK, many of which could be avoided through education, training and preventative measures. Outcomes for people of dark skin tones are different to those of counterparts with lighter skin colour. Poor understanding of how skin conditions manifest on dark skin is one reason for this disparity.

Using carefully worded and respectful language, the handbook provides essential information and quick tips to help healthcare professionals build confidence and expertise in accurately assessing people across the full spectrum of skin tones. Real-life examples illustrate how signs at different stages of diabetic foot disease can be interpreted correctly. Recognising less obvious signs in dark skin tones enables faster and more appropriate responses, and improved outcomes.

The authors hope that, as well as improving individual practice, this resource will transform our collective

understanding of healthcare and achieve a more inclusive and effective system.

The handbook can be downloaded [here](#).

## Digital eye screening to be available in the community

NHS England has announced plans for advanced eye scans for people with diabetes to be carried out in the community. It hopes that this will reduce the number of hospital ophthalmology appointments by up to 120 000 per year.

More than 1 in 3 people living with diabetes will develop diabetic retinopathy, and it is a leading cause of vision loss in working-age adults. People are usually unaware of the condition during its early stages, so regular screening is essential to detect those at risk before visual symptoms occur. Early treatment can prevent blindness in 90% of those at risk.

As part of a programme to improve outcomes, the rollout of optical coherence tomography (OCT) scans will mean that around 60 000 people who are at higher risk of diabetic retinopathy will be able to receive advanced screening outside of the traditional hospital setting and closer to their homes. Locations will include some larger GP practices, community hospitals and mobile vans, and it will free up hospital care.

OCT creates a detailed 3D image of the optic nerve and retina. It provides more

accurate results than standard cameras by detecting changes, such as a thickening of the retina, that do not show up in colour photography.

Fewer than a third of services have previously been able to offer OCT, and not equitably across the country. NHS staff are being trained in OCT screening and all eye-care service are expected to be using the technology by October 2025.

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