



COMPLICATIONS | HEALTH SERVICES

Project: Best Foot Forward: Foot screening to avoid limb loss

Through donor support, Dr. Nicole Woods, Associate Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto, is saving people with diabetes from preventable leg and foot loss.

In healthy individuals, blood sugars are controlled by a hormone called insulin, which lowers blood sugar levels. For people with type 2 diabetes, they can no longer produce or use enough insulin to control their blood sugars, which can lead to health complications such as nerve damage, sight loss, heart disease, kidney failure, anxiety, amputations, and even death.

Leg and foot loss due to diabetic foot injury is one of Canada's most pressing and preventable healthcare crises. Leg and foot wounds from diabetes-related complications account for more than 70% of lower limb losses in Canada.

Dr. Woods and her team are improving the prevention and early treatment of diabetes related foot wounds for structurally disadvantaged Ontarians living with diabetes, which can lead to loss of lower limbs and early death.

Her team will train healthcare workers and care providers to deliver foot check-ups, and co-design a care referral network with community partners and stakeholders. This will enable care providers to identify and intervene before foot wounds advance to limb loss.

This research will address disparities related to foot care in Ontario as well as connect persons living with diabetes to care when they need it.