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US Veterans with Diabetes & Mental Health Issues at Higher Risk for Amputation

Diabetes can lead to many health complications, including toe, foot, and lower leg amputation. People with diabetes need to vigilantly work to control their blood sugar levels and monitor their feet for any changes. Researchers have found that US Veterans with diabetes and mental health issues have a higher risk of major amputations (toes, foot, and ankle or above).

Investigators at the VA New Jersey Health Care System leading this first study of its kind found that veterans with diabetes and below average mental health scores had a 0.5% rate of major amputations compared to a rate of 0.3% for those with average mental health scores and 0.2% for those with the highest level of mental health functioning. The researchers suspect that mental health issues may interfere with good diabetes care and good foot care. More research is underway to determine the best way to help US Veterans with diabetes and mental health issues to avoid amputation.

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