

All patients with diabetes should have their shoes, socks and dressings removed and their legs and feet carefully **assessed at the TIME of admission** for evidence of:

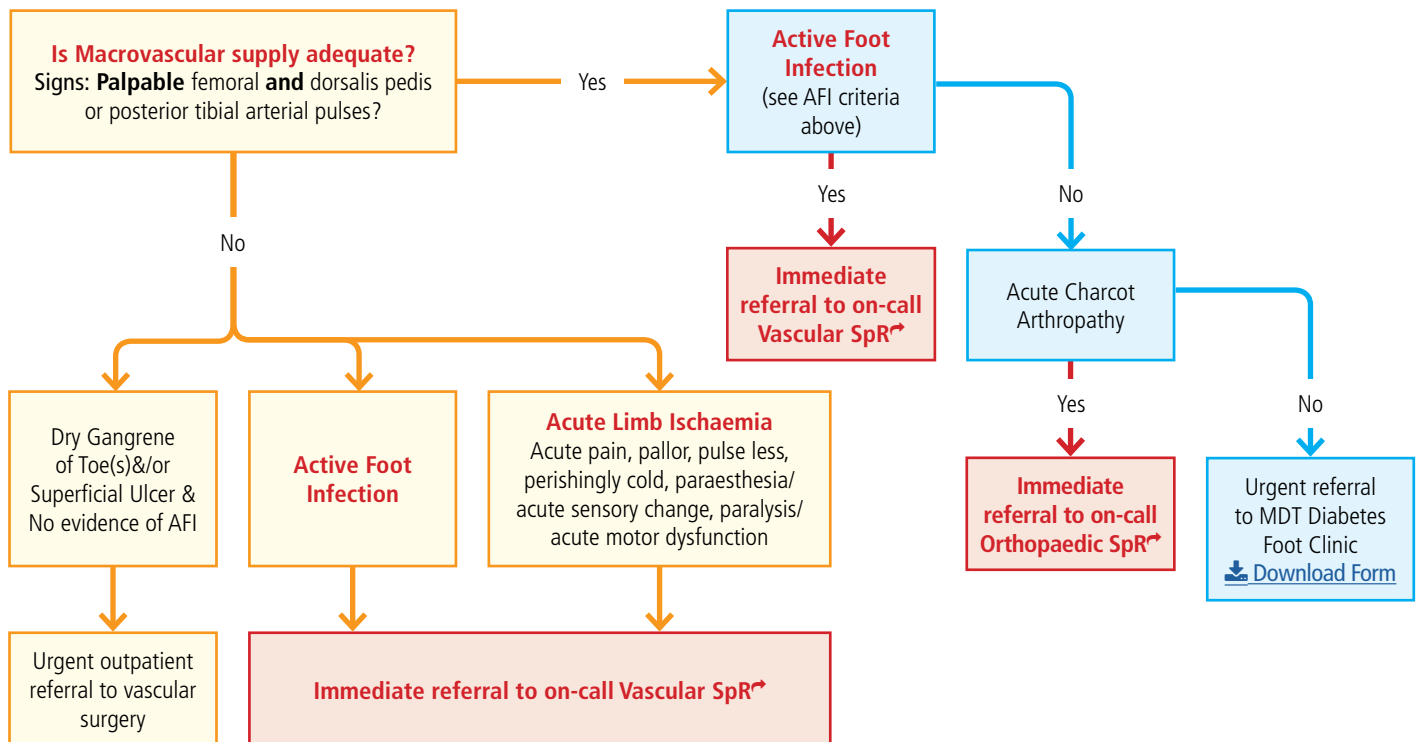
- A. Vascular Compromise**
- B. Ulceration**
- C. Active Foot Infection (AFI)**
- D. Acute Charcot Arthropathy***
- E. Examination should include neurological examination and assessment of peripheral circulation**

Document in patient notes.

Any patient with either or both of the following should be referred for **immediate** review:

- A. Critical Limb Ischaemia**
- B. Purple Mottling of the Limb**
- C. Evidence of Active Foot Infection (AFI):**
 - i. Evidence of spreading soft tissue infection
 - ii. Osteomyelitis**/abscess/pus/wet gangrene
 - iii. Exposed tendon/bone/joint
 - iv. Palpable gas in the tissue or gas visible on X-ray
 - v. Sepsis secondary to foot infection

Emergency Diabetes Foot Referral Pathway



The assessing doctor MUST:

- **Screen for sepsis** and initiate sepsis pathway immediately if required
- Initiate appropriate antibiotics (See UHL Antimicrobial guidelines for Diabetic foot infection) and request a **foot x-ray**
- Review **diabetes control**, exclude and treat acute complications (DKA/HHS/Hypo). Avoid harm by undertaking regular review. **DKA/HHS are medical emergencies and if present need immediate medical management.** Urgent medical review (if required) via Medical SpR on-call.
- **Consider AKI** and treat if present

How to refer:

- **Vascular team:** Vascular SpR on-call (contact via Switchboard) – available 24/7
- **Orthopaedic team:** Orthopaedic SpR on-call (contact via Switchboard) – available 24/7
- **Medical SpR:** Medical SpR on-call (contact via Switchboard) for out of hours and emergency reviews.

Referral to the Diabetes Team

- Ensure **all patients with diabetes and foot ulceration** (whether requiring surgical review or not) are **referred** to the diabetes team **within 24hrs of admission.**
- Diabetes Specialist Nurses via ICE for review next working day or Diabetes SpR via switchboard for urgent referrals (Mon-Fri, 9-5)
- If patient requires urgent diabetes review out of hours/weekend refer to medical SpR on-call via switchboard.

Definitions

***Charcot arthropathy** - a progressive degeneration of a weight bearing joint which can result in bone destruction and deformity. It commonly presents as hot, painful, swollen red neuropathic foot.

**** Osteomyelitis** - infection affecting the bone. This may present with pain, redness, swelling, exposed bone or joint destruction. X-ray changes are not always present in acute osteomyelitis.