



by Kris Campbell

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## skin | types 1 & 2

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### diabetic options and treatments

**DIABETES AFFECTS OVER 20** million Americans, and more than 40 million Americans have prediabetes. It is very likely that a portion of our own clients represent some of these pre-diabetic individuals. The first thing we need to understand is the difference between the two types of diabetes, and the related conditions that may affect the skin. We can then determine

Diabetes affects the skin as well as the rest of the body. Common areas include hands, feet and elbows. Dry skin occurs in these areas due to loss of fluid with high glucose levels. Dry skin needs to stay hydrated and protected, because if left untreated, fissures or cuts may present on the area. Moisturizing and using anti-itch products will also be beneficial, as many develop severe itching.

The body is affected in many ways by insulin issues. This opens the door to a new way of thinking for the therapist, since we definitely do not want to do any harm to the client during a treatment. Conditions most likely to affect a spa or facial treatment may include the following: poor wound healing, infections and neuropathy issues. Poor wound healing and infections are both issues that need to be looked at in regards to sanitation. Gloves should always be worn in order to prevent further issues for them to battle. How a client is massaged and draped can affect areas of the body due to neuropathy. These areas can be sensitive to warm or cold temperatures, and the client may experience pain when touched.

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a course of treatment that will be most beneficial, and at the same time calming to irritating skin conditions.

Diabetes mellitus is a group of metabolic diseases that causes a person to have high blood sugar. This is commonly known as diabetes, a condition in which the body cannot produce the required amount of insulin to properly break down the glucose (sugar) in the blood. This can be caused when the cells don't respond to the insulin that is normally produced, or when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. The two main kinds of diabetes are Types I and II. In cases of Type I diabetes, the body makes little or no insulin. Type II is the most common form of diabetes. It arises when the cells cannot use insulin properly.

Anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-microbial types of products will also be beneficial, as the hands and feet are prone to infection. Bacterial and fungal infections can also occur around the nails, hair follicles, armpits, groin and corners of the mouth on a diabetic client.

Anti-glycation ingredients are becoming more popular for anti-aging, but they are also needed by the diabetic client, since there is a predominant thickening of the skin that occurs due to the glucose level problems. These ingredients include carnosine, benfotiamine, plant extracts of the ericaceae family (cranberry, blueberry, huckleberry), tocopherols, antioxidants, Matrix Metalloproteinase Inhibitor (MMPI), amino acids and other collagen supporting ingredients.

Several contraindications for clients with diabetes must be considered and explained to the client. Microdermabrasion, chemical peels and dermal needling are all contraindicated for the diabetic client. If a case of diabetes is advanced or poorly treated (tissues are unhealthy or circulation is poor), several other "normal" treatments should also be avoided. These may include micropigmentation, laser resurfacing, waxing, laser hair removal and electrolysis.

Body services, including hand and foot treatments, must also be carefully considered by therapists. Massage can decrease the blood glucose levels by increasing the action of serum insulin

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lin. Some diabetics can tell when their sugar levels are dropping, but some do not have that knowledge. Lighter, more simple massage should be offered. If the client feels clammy to the touch or makes any mention of being dizzy or faint, have some juice available. This will quickly raise the blood glucose level. The hands and feet are key areas where a client may experience neuropathy symptoms. These areas are also more

prone to infections when nail treatments are performed. Hot stones and paraffin wax should be avoided due to the possible increase or decrease of sensation in those areas.

When you are giving a foot treatment, look for nails that are thickened, infected, swelling, red, calloused or have cracked skin. When you touch the client, you will be able to tell by their pulse whether they are getting enough blood

flow. You will also notice if the feet are hot, which means they could be inflamed. These criteria are important for helping you determine the right course of treatment and products for the client.

Several treatments have been shown to offer relief for the diabetic client. Reflexology, meridian therapy, aromatherapy and auricular therapy are just a few. The wellness movement has pushed these types of therapies to the forefront. More research and studies are being done to see the types of each that work best to relieve the skin conditions caused by diabetes.

Realize that each client with diabetes has their own unique set of conditions, and should always be looked at as an individual. They may also be suffering from other health issues that could create a contraindication.

Most people with diabetes will suffer from skin disorders caused by the condition at some point in their lives, depending on the severity of the diabetes. Skin problems can be a key sign to the professional that a client has diabetes. With the incidence of diabetes on the rise, the skin care professional needs to be able to identify dry skin, bacterial infections, fungal infections and itching in order to treat clients with diabetes.

The next diabetic person who walks into your treatment room could become a loyal client because of your specialized knowledge on how to relieve the unique issues they face. ■

**Kris Campbell** is CEO and a formulator for *Tecniche*, a skin care line dedicated to sensitive skin. She is a certified oncology esthetician, and works with Morag Currin (author of *Oncology Esthetics: A Practitioner's Guide and Health-Challenged Skin: The Estheticians' Desk Reference*) to address the skin concerns of clients who are undergoing cancer treatments. Campbell runs trainings, writes for trade publications and speaks at industry events about conditions faced by people with health challenged skin.