

# 1 Introduction

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## A Career in Nursing Foot Care

What is the demand for foot care nurses?

Across Canada, employers from Medical Health Teams, Clinics, Health Centres and Community Agencies actively recruit foot care nurse graduates year round, as there is a serious shortage of foot care nurses that possess the skills and knowledge acquired from foot care nurse programs.

Many employers email foot care nurse educators directly with job opportunities for graduates to consider, or to offer to mentor students at their foot care practice location, in the hopes to hire the nurses upon graduation.

Unfortunately, many positions that have been posted in the past few years have not been filled, and some employers do not get responses from advertisements, as there are not sufficient numbers of highly qualified

foot care nurses that can provide foot care for persons with diabetes.

### Career-related notes

Many graduates of foot care programs are practicing foot care in their workplace and/or in private practice. There is high demand for foot care nurses due to an aging population and an increasing number of persons with diabetes.

There is a high demand for foot care nurses in funded clinics, home care settings, interdisciplinary community health care centers and health care teams.

There is a shortage of well-trained foot care nurses in most urban, suburban, rural, and remote-access communities across Canada. See the Chapter 2: Career Opportunities in Foot Care for more information.

## Advancements in Nursing Foot Care in Canada

Since 1985, nursing foot care has changed dramatically in Canada. Although nursing is regulated, nursing foot care education and practices has historically been, and remains, unregulated for most provinces and territories in Canada; in recent years, foot care nurses across Canada have formed a growing community of like-minded individuals from across Can-

ada, and thus a national organization—the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFCN)—was born to improve quality of care, education, and to develop guidelines. The timeline below highlights the history of nursing foot care in Canada.

#### *Before 1985*

There is little evidence of the existence of formal education programs or guidelines for nursing foot care in Canada.

#### *1985 – 2002*

Formal foot care courses for nurses across Canada begin to emerge. The courses or practice are not regulated and the curriculum duration generally ranged from one day (eight hours) to five days in length (40 hours), with the exception of a 90 hour course in Montreal. Courses were traditionally called Basic, Advanced and Diabetic courses.

#### *2003*

A foot care course in Montreal Quebec increased their course length to 135 hours.

#### *2005*

Two foot care nurses, C. Lazenby and J. Atkinson, initiated the discussion about a national foot care association, citing concerns with inconsistent, outdated, and unsafe foot care practices and educational programs across Canada to V. Tirani, Director of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario's (RNAO) Best Practice Guidelines (BPG). The proposed action plan focused on forming a national foot care group, advocating for consistent and up-to-date foot care training, and encouraging research and publications in nursing foot care. The Foot Care Nurses Network (FCNN) was formed out of this discussion. The FCNN's first meeting was held in Brockville, Ontario, attended by an advisory committee of seven foot care nurses. Improvements to nursing foot care education and regulation were discovered to be inhibited by the following costs : creating a national certification exam for nursing foot care, to be managed by the CNA, would cost over \$100,000 to develop.

Best Practice Guidelines (BGP) development, in partnership with the RNAO, would require the FCNN to finance part of the estimated cost of \$150,000.

#### *2006*

The FCNN completed their Draft Document, including Vision, Purpose, Values and Goals. Shortly afterwards, the volunteer committee members all agreed to dissolve the group, due to the limited availability of members.

The following information was gathered by a comparison of Canadian foot care courses led by C. Lazenby and foot care students.

- Courses were increasing in duration and ranged from 35 hours to 180 hours.
- No regulations were in place.
- Quality and quantity of course content and practical/clinical networking opportunities continued to vary widely.
- Tuition/course supplies ranged from \$168 to \$4500.
- Most courses were taught in both class and clinical settings.

### *2007*

Foot Care Canada, a precursor to the CAFCN, was formed by fourteen foot care nurses and educators who met at a local foot care conference in Kitchener, Ontario to discuss the future direction of foot care nurses.

The group agreed there was a need for the development of national guidelines for nursing foot care. A consensus was reached to develop a national communication strategy. Consensus was also reached to adopt the name of Foot Care Canada.

Sixty foot care nurses including many members of Foot Care Canada, members of the Manitoba Association of Foot Care Nurses and educators met for a second time in 2007 in Winnipeg at a conference to discuss the future direction of a national foot care association. A draft position statement was presented and formalized by a newly formed ad hoc committee, including C. Lazenby, P. MacDonald, S. Bird, D. Schofield and M. MacKay. A motion was passed to formalize the position statement.

### *2008*

Forty-five foot care nurses, including many members of Foot Care Canada, educators and managers from across Canada, met in Kingston, Ontario for a full day workshop to discuss how to advance national foot care nurse guidelines for skills, education, and eventual certification.

The group agreed to develop a national communication strategy, such as a website that could reach an estimated 3000–6000 foot care nurses across Canada, as part of the process of forming a new national Foot Care Association, with the ultimate goal of developing national guidelines and certification for foot care nurses.

Foot Care Canada had a second committee meeting in 2008 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to formalize the position statement, which included a mission statement, goals, and organizational structure, which included five executives and eight provincial/territorial advisors. The first volunteer executive committee comprised of C. Lazenby (Chair), P. MacDonald, S. Bird, D. Schofield and M. MacKay.

### *2009*

Foot Care Canada met once in Winnipeg, Manitoba and increased the number of provincial advisors to eleven. The executive committee had monthly teleconferences that year in preparation for launching their website and becoming legally incorporated as a Canadian non-profit nursing association.

The College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Manitoba was the first to introduce new competency regulations for the start of the 2010 registration year for foot care nurses.

### *2010*

Foot Care Canada was renamed and incorporated as the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFCN), Association canadienne des infirmières et infirmiers en soins de pieds.

In 2010, CAFCN's first Annual General Meeting was chaired by C. Lazenby and CAFCN hosted the first annual national foot care conference in Kingston, Ontario in May 2010. Foot Care Canada's existing executive committee was approved to be CAFCN's first executive committee by a unanimous vote.

Infection and Prevention Control of Canada (IPAC), formerly the Community and Hospital Infection Control Association (CHICA), developed a Foot Care Infection Control Audit Tool available at the IPAC Canada website.

2011 - present

See the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses' website for updated information about their activities including:

- yearly conferences (Vancouver BC, Calgary AB, Winnipeg MB, Ottawa ON, Halifax NS, Montreal, QC)
- development of national guidelines
- certification
- links to evidence-based literature and industry suppliers
- current list of ad hoc and executive committees
- list of provincial and territorial advisors
- list of foot care education, associations, and funding resources for each province and territory in Canada
- continuing education activities
- membership benefits, which include access to:
  - previous conference presentations
  - provincial and territorial advisors quarterly reports
  - group professional liability and business insurance

## Different Options for Canadian Foot Care Education

While many Canadian courses reach up to 200 hours of curriculum, one-day basic foot care courses and two-day advanced foot care courses are still available. This is due, in part, to a lack of national guidelines for foot care nurse skills, a lack of educational programs, and to the small number of foot care nurse educators currently available. Each Canadian province and territory has several different programs, which operate from a variety of sources.

To see a comparison of the variety of courses in Canada, visit the CAFCN website. The following list of variables will help nurses to evaluate foot care nurse programs and continuing competency opportunities. During such a comparison, it is important to remember the following points.

- Currently, the only nationally-recognized certification or re-certification process and exams for nurses in Canada is designed and being administered by the Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), a non-profit agency that was established over 100 years ago.
- The CNA has 20 specialty certification areas at the time of print. Although none of these are foot care nursing, the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFNCN), is currently working on a pan-Canada collaborative project towards making this a reality by first developing national foot care competencies. See the Certification section in this chapter for more information.
- Currently, foot care nurse educators and foot care courses for nurses across Canada are not regulated by nursing regulatory bodies or professional associations.
- Nurses may write and pass an exam from an agency, in which the nurse may receive a certificate of completion for successfully completing a foot care course, but are not considered certified nor would this self-proclaimed designation be nationally recognized.

## Variables of Canadian foot care nurse programs

- Course length: 8–200 hours
- Course content: Courses can include some or all of the following training methods:
  - elements of performance
  - course learning outcomes
  - course training package (in class or online)
  - mentorship program
  - webinars
  - discussion boards
  - formative evaluation (written assignments/lab/practical exercises, reflective practice exercises)
  - summative evaluation (clinical/examinations/exit competencies)
  - Certificate of Completion (testing) or Certificate of Attendance (no testing)
- Course may accept both regulated and non-regulated health care workers
- Courses for providers
- Courses can be tailored to meet the educational needs of:
  - private colleges
  - private nursing companies
  - private practice nurses
  - colleges
  - universities
  - conference centers
  - nursing homes
  - community centers
  - experienced foot care nurses

## Competency Guidelines

The Canadian Nurses Association states, “Canadian RNs are accountable for providing competent nursing care, which means they must maintain and continuously enhance the knowledge, skills, attitude and judgment required to meet client needs in an evolving health-care system” (1).

Competency guidelines provide a resource for foot care nurses to assess their competency and room for improvement in all stages of their careers and, as such, these guidelines play an important role in structuring education. Foot Care Kingston recommends the following competencies, modified from Foot Care Kingston’s website (2).

### New graduates

For continued competency in the field of nursing foot care, it is advisable that new foot care nurse program graduates work within a health care foot care team with easily accessible foot care mentors (3).

#### *Foot Care Nurse Graduates:*

For continued competency in the field of nursing foot care, it is advisable that foot care nurse program graduates accumulate a minimum of 750 hours of nursing foot care practice PLUS a minimum of 50 hours of nursing foot care (or related) continuing education, over a period of five years (3, 4, 5).

### *Foot Care Nurse Educator Graduates:*

For continued competency in the field of nursing foot care, it is advisable that Foot Care Nurse Educator Graduates accumulate a minimum of 750 hours of nursing foot care practice PLUS a minimum of 50 hours of nursing foot care teaching PLUS a minimum of 50 hours of nursing foot care (or related) continuing education, over a period of five years (3, 4, 5).

### *Recommended Continuing Education Topics:*

Related nursing foot care topics could include, but are not be limited to:

- infection control
- wound care
- orthotics/footwear
- biomechanics
- anatomy/physiology
- diabetes, exercise
- preventative health
- chronic disease management

### *Recommended Continuing Education Events:*

It is advisable to participate in nursing foot care (or related) continuing education programs that:

- award a Certificate of Completion (3, 4)
- award continuing education credits (3, 6, 7)
- have an evaluation component to the program (3, 4, 6, 7)
- are associated with a local, provincial or national nursing association (3, 4, 6, 7)
- are a recognized educational program (3)
- have workshops presented by foot care nurse educators
- have a mentorships/preceptorships component (3)
- are peer-reviewed or research based (3, 4, 7)
- involve publications (3, 4, 7)
- leads to or provides to a non-profit certification program recognized by the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFCN) (once available) (4, 7)

## **Certification**

The following is a letter written February 2, 2015 from Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFCN) President Pat MacDonald (8).

*The Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses (CAFCN) is an official non-profit organization for foot care nurses in Canada, whose Mission is to advance the practice of foot care through a collaborative and networking process for all individuals providing foot care.*

*At this time there is no certification process for nursing foot care in Canada that is recognized by provincial regulatory bodies.*

*CAFCN is in the process of developing national competencies, educational opportunities, and a certification process for foot care nurses across Canada.*

*CAFCN is currently in discussions with the Federal Government to develop a set of pan-Canadian competencies to guide and monitor nursing foot care practice across Canada. This will also facilitate research in the substantive area by providing a framework for the study of nursing foot care. The results of this project will enable CAFCN to identify the educational requirements for safe, competent and ethical care.*

The following two exercises will assist you with determining your areas of strength with your existing transferrable skills, and also with identifying areas for development during your continuing education of nursing foot care skills.

### Exercise #1: Nursing Foot Care Knowledge and Skills

Complete this as a pre-test using a pen. After you complete your course, redo this assessment as a post-test using a differently coloured pen and record your new score below.

Rate yourself by circling the most appropriate answer.

How would you rate your knowledge/skill with respect to:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Assessments, treatments and plan of care for foot care?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
2. Foot care infection prevention and control practices?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
3. Evidence-based or reflective practice?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
4. Foot care guidelines, practices and standards?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
5. Risk factors that may lead to foot problems?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
6. Normal anatomy of the nail and foot?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
7. Biomechanics or gait analysis of the foot?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
8. Abnormal foot structure or nail conditions?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
9. How to proceed with my nursing foot care career planning?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
10. Foot care knowledge and skills for persons with diabetes?	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
Your total pre-test score is: _____ Date: _____					
Your total post-test score is: _____ Date: _____					
Strengths:					
Areas for development:					

## Exercise #2: Preparedness for Learning

Complete this as a pre-test using a pen. After you complete your course, redo this assessment as a post-test using a differently coloured pen and record your new score below.

Rate yourself by circling the most appropriate answer.

How would you rate your preparedness:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Some-what Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I can easily allocate between two to six hours/week in a quiet space in my home for assignments.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
2. My computer and internet skills are great.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
3. I can easily allocate extra hours for my practical and for clinical placements.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
4. I love taking continuing education courses.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
5. I can easily meet weekly assignments deadlines.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
6. I find it easy to consult with colleagues.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
7. I like to know what health-related services are available in my community.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
8. I am a self-directed learner.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
9. I have plans to provide foot care when I complete this program.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
10. I have plans to implement best practice guidelines and strategies in my new foot care practice.	10	7.5	5	2.5	0
Your total pre-test score is: _____ Date: _____					
Your total post-test score is: _____ Date: _____					
Strengths:					
Areas for development:					

## Assignment

- Objective:
1. Explore and articulate career options, education, competency guidelines and advancements in nursing foot care.
  2. Develop a personal foot care practice learning plan.

Marking:

- Question #1 - Nurse needs to fill in all three areas to get full points (pre-test score, two comments on strengths and two comments on areas for development)
- Question #2 - Nurse needs to fill in all three areas to get full points (pre-test score, two comments on strengths and two comments on areas for development)
- Questions #3 to #10 - One point per correct multiple choice answer (out of 8)

#	Exercise	Response
1.	<p>Complete the pre-test now: “Self Assessment #1: Nursing Foot Care Knowledge and Skill”. What is your pre-test score?</p> <p>Redo this test when your course is completed and compare your pre-test and post-test scores.</p> <p>Comment on two areas of strength:</p> <p>Comment on two areas for development:</p>	Pre-test score =
2.	<p>Complete the pre-test now: “Self Assessment #2: Preparedness for Learning”. What is your pre-test score?</p> <p>Redo this test when your course is completed and compare your pre-test and post-test scores.</p> <p>Comment on two areas of strength:</p> <p>Comment on two areas for development:</p>	Pre-test score =
3.	Which areas of nursing foot care are listed in this textbook’s Table of Contents?	<p>a) Infection prevention and control, pedicures in Canada, techniques to reconstruct nails</p> <p>b) Anatomy, glossary, nursing foot care skills</p> <p>c) Diabetic foot care, anatomy, terminology, pedicures</p>

4.	<p>When did the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses become incorporated?</p> <p>See the “Advancements in Nursing Foot Care in Canada” section of this chapter.</p>	<p>a) 1985</p> <p>b) 2002</p> <p>c) 2010</p>
5.	<p>Which statement is most correct regarding courses in nursing foot care across Canada?</p> <p>See the “Different Options for Canadian Foot Care Education,” section of this chapter and compare foot care programs listed on the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses website.</p>	<p>a) Courses are all the same</p> <p>b) National certification does not exist at time of print (2015)</p> <p>c) Courses are regulated</p>
6.	<p>How can you maintain nursing foot care competence after your course?</p>	<p>a) 50 hours of foot care</p> <p>b) 6 hours of continuing education over a one year period</p> <p>c) Minimum 750 hrs of nursing foot care practice PLUS a minimum of 50 hrs of nursing foot care (or related) continuing education, over a period of five years</p> <p>d) No need to maintain competencies</p>
7.	<p>How many Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) are relevant to nursing foot care practices?</p> <p>Look up the website for the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) website.</p>	<p>a) Under 20</p> <p>b) 0</p> <p>c) Over 40</p>
8.	<p>How many Standards or Guidelines are directly or indirectly relevant to nursing foot care practice for RNs in NWT?</p> <p>Look up the website for the Registered Nurses Association in NWT and Nunavut (RNANTNU).</p>	<p>a) 4</p> <p>b) 1</p> <p>c) 10</p>
9.	<p>How many Standard Guidelines are directly or indirectly relevant to nursing foot care practice for RNs and RPNs in Ontario?</p> <p>Look up the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) website.</p>	<p>a) 1</p> <p>b) None of them</p> <p>c) All of them</p>
10.	<p>How many specialty areas are listed with the Canadian Nurse’s Association (CNA)?</p> <p>Look up the website for the Canadian Nurse’s Association (CNA).</p>	<p>a) 12</p> <p>b) None</p> <p>c) More than 19</p>

## References

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