

Podiatric Care – The Importance of Good Foot Care

Care of your Feet

One of the key factors to a healthy old age is mobility. Moving around comfortably is fundamental to one's lifestyle, health and sense of well being. 'If your feet hurt, you hurt all over'. Someone with painful feet will do no more walking than is absolutely necessary.

Three out of four people develop serious foot problems as they age. Healthy feet contribute to your safety and health. How?

- Healthy feet help you keep your balance. Good balance can prevent falls, a major cause of injury and hospitalization.
- Healthy feet allow you to stay active. When your feet are too sore to walk, you lose strength and become at greater risk for falls. Walking is the perfect exercise to keep your weight down, prevent blood clots and keep your bones and muscles strong.
- Your feet can even give you an early warning about serious health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, nerve damage and poor blood circulation.

Basic foot care

Many foot problems can be avoided if you:

- Check your feet every day. Look for cuts, blisters, bruises, sores, infected toenails or swelling.
- Wash your feet every day with warm water.
- Keep your feet soft and smooth. Use cream if your skin is dry and cracked.
- Use talcum powder if your feet sweat a lot.
- Wear comfortable shoes & socks. Many people have foot problems because their shoes don't fit, don't give proper support or don't have enough grip on the ground. Socks help keep your feet dry.

- Be active every day. Walking is the best way to keep you, and your feet healthy.
- Take care of your toenails. Cut or file your nails.

See your doctor or foot specialist right away if you notice:

- a sore on your foot that doesn't heal or gets infected
- pain when you walk that stops when you rest
- unusual coldness, cramps, numbness, tingling or discomfort in your feet
- that you are less sensitive to foot pain, hot or cold
- the skin on your feet or legs changes color
- a change in the shape/structure of your foot

Shoes for health and safety

- Since your feet may not be the same size, choose shoes that are 1/2 inch longer than your longest toe. Blisters, ulcers and bunions are often linked to shoes that are too small.
- Leather and canvas shoes are the best choices for letting your feet "breathe."
- Get shoes with closed toes and backs; they protect your feet from injury and provide support.
- Running or walking shoes tend to be more comfortable and can make you more sure-footed.

Diabetes and foot care

People with diabetes often have trouble with their feet. These problems are not just painful, they can be dangerous! Diabetes can damage your nerves. You might not feel hot, cold or pain in your feet. Little cuts or sores, if not cared for, can then become deeper and bigger ulcers.

Diabetes can also cause poor blood flow in your legs which can make sores take longer to heal. Ulcers can become infected, and foot tissue can die because of poor or no blood flow (gangrene). Check your feet

every day for cuts, sores, ingrown or infected toenails, dry cracked skin or swelling.

Stay on your feet!

Wearing shoes is your best protection from falls. Going shoeless indoors and out can increase your risk for falls. Each year about one-third of seniors are hurt in falls. Their injuries include sprains and strains, broken bones or head trauma.

PODIATRISTS IN OUR AREA

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Makes regular visits to Ridge Oak residents in their apartments.
Call the Ridge Oak office to schedule an appointment.

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