

Foot Notes

SUMMER 2011

HEALTHY FEET FOR AN ACTIVE LIFE

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Safety Tips for a Barefoot Summer

Whether you're walking on the beach, wandering your local park or enjoying your own backyard, going barefoot on your adventure is one of the many simple pleasures of summertime.

But bare feet need to beware. Every summer, our office treats patients for cuts, puncture wounds and other barefoot injuries. To help you and your family avoid similar injuries, we're sharing some tips for a safer barefoot summer.

► Contact Our Office Within 24 hours of Suffering a Puncture Wound

This type of injury can embed unsterile foreign objects deep inside your foot and trap bacteria. A puncture wound must be cleaned properly and monitored throughout the healing process. This will help to avoid complications, such as tissue and bone infections or damage to tendons and muscles in the foot.

► Don't Forget to Apply Sunscreen to the Tops and Bottoms of Your Feet

Many patients are surprised to learn that skin cancer, including the most serious form, melanoma, does occur on the feet. In fact, melanoma of the foot is particularly dangerous because people rarely think to look for it on their feet which may result in a later-stage diagnosis and poor prognosis for recovery.

► Wear Flip-flops or Sandals Around Swimming Pools, Locker Rooms and Beaches

It's best to keep your feet protected to avoid cuts and abrasions from rough surfaces and sharp objects hidden beneath sandy beaches and to prevent contact with bacteria, fungus or viruses that can cause athlete's foot, plantar warts or other problems.

► Routinely Inspect Your Feet and Your Children's Feet for Skin Problems

Going barefoot can increase your risk for athlete's foot, warts, calluses and other skin problems. Inspect feet regularly for any changes or signs of problems. The earlier a skin condition is detected, the easier it is to treat.

► Use Caution and Common Sense

Every year, people lose toes while mowing the lawn barefoot. Others suffer serious burns from accidentally stepping on stray campfire coals or fireworks. Murky rivers, lakes and ponds can conceal sharp objects underwater. Plus, those with diabetes should never go barefoot, even indoors, because their nervous system may not "feel" an injury and their circulatory system will struggle to heal breaks in the skin.



Remember, you can still have summertime fun but you'll enjoy it even more if you're foot-injury free!

Biking and Swimming: Great Ways to Take the Stress off Your Feet



Many of us have been cooped up indoors through a long winter and we're ready to head outdoors to get in some warm weather exercise. But if you suffer from foot pain, what are the best exercise options? Activities that have no direct impact on your feet, like biking and swimming are two of the best exercises if you have foot pain.

- **With any exercise, it's important to start slowly and gradually work into a routine. If you notice a sudden increase in foot pain as a result of your workout, call our office for an appointment.**

Corn or Callus, What's the Difference?

Now that you're wearing those summer shoes or hanging out at the pool, you may notice some thick areas of skin on your feet, possibly even causing some pain. It could be a corn or callus, but what's the difference between the two?

Corn

Getting its name from its resemblance to a corn kernel, a corn is a small, circular, thickened area found in the skin of the foot. Corns are hard in the middle and usually form after repeated pressure on the skin, such as rubbing by a shoe on a toe.

Callus

When your foot rubs repeatedly against your shoe or sock, the friction and pressure can cause the skin to produce a thick layer of protective skin called a callus. A callus can vary in size and does not have the hard center the corn has, so it may not be as painful as a corn.

Whether you have a corn or callus, don't try to remove the skin at home, as serious infection may occur. It is also important to avoid using medicated corn pads for the same reason. If you are suffering from either issue, make an appointment with our office and we can evaluate the best course of treatment for your particular condition.

