

FOOTNOTES 2003

N E W S Y O U C A N U S E

SUMMER 2003

Ten Tips for Healthy Summer Feet

Summer—that carefree time of picnics, pools, and outdoor festivals—will be a lot more fun if your feet aren't hurting! Here are 10 tips for keeping your feet problem free this summer:



- ✓ **Don't walk barefoot!** Your feet can suffer cuts and foreign bodies that can easily become infected.
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect** spider and ant bites—they can quickly become infected.
- ✓ **Wear socks!** Bare feet inside of shoes are prime targets for athlete's foot and other fungal infections, blisters and calluses. Keep feet dry by changing socks during the day when necessary.
- ✓ **Don't "pop" blisters**—they are a natural barrier to infection.
- ✓ **Ignore fashion!** When buying sandals, make sure they offer support for the arch and cushioning for the heel.
- ✓ **Wear larger shoes** to accommodate swelling feet, especially if you work outside.
- ✓ **Don't forget sunscreen**—your feet need it, too!
- ✓ **If it hurts, don't use it!** Injuries to the foot and ankle should not be ignored. Anything that is still painful after 3 days of rest should be evaluated by a doctor.
- ✓ **Warm up and stretch** before exercising, and cool down and stretch afterwards. Those few additional minutes will go a long way toward preventing injuries to your Achilles tendon and plantar fascia.
- ✓ **Keep well-hydrated** to avoid leg cramps and muscle spasms. 🐾

Ingrown Nails Can Become a Big Problem!

Ingrown toenails are a common and mostly benign foot problem that often occurs in children and teenagers. However, they can become a big problem when parents attempt at-home treatment or "bathroom surgery," which can worsen the condition and lead to potentially serious complications such as severe pain, infection of the skin or underlying

bone and possible deformity of the toe.

Ingrown toenails occur when the corners or sides of the nail curve and grow into the soft tissue of the toe. The most common symptom is swelling and redness in the toes—especially the big toe. Some children may complain that their feet hurt when wearing shoes. To help rid your child of the problem, try changing to

properly-fitted shoes or soaking the foot in warm soapy water. If these measures don't help, make an appointment with our office for an examination and treatment. Don't try to snip away the ingrown part of the nail!

The tendency to get ingrown toenails can be inherited. If they are a frequent problem for your child, a surgical procedure may be required to permanently remove a portion of the nail. To help your child avoid the pain and possible infection of this problem:

- Make sure their feet are kept clean.

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“What’s Wrong with My Big Toe?”

The first metatarsophalangeal (1st MTP) joint... which is located at the base of the big toe, is the most complex joint in the foot. This is where bones, tendons and ligaments work together to transmit and distribute the body’s weight, especially during walking and running. And so, naturally, it’s the spot where any number of things can go wrong.

When a patient comes into our office with the question “what’s wrong with my big toe?” a variety of diagnoses and treatments present themselves. In fact, this summer the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons has published an extensive guideline to assist podiatric foot and ankle surgeons and other medical practitioners in diagnosing and treating these disorders.


Here are some of the problems that can cause pain in this very important joint.

Bunions—This is probably the most frequently treated disorder of


the 1st MTP joint. A bunion, which appears as a “bump” or protuberance on the joint, is sometimes blamed on the wearing of high-heeled or pointed-toed shoes. In actuality, it is most often caused by inherited faulty foot biomechanics, which can be made worse by improperly fitting shoes. Switching to wider shoes, using a bunion pad, or relieving pain with ice and medications may help, but they won’t make the bunion disappear. Because they usually get progressively worse, surgery is often recommended if the pain interferes with walking, physical activities and regular exercise.

Arthritis—There are many possible causes of arthritis in the 1st MTP joint. It usually occurs from some type of trauma to the joint. For example, tennis players and golfers, who repeatedly use the same movement, will experience repetitive trauma in the joint. Or, a tradesman who often stoops or squats in his job may

damage the joint. Even something as simple as badly stubbing the toe can result in permanent damage. Eventually, as the cartilage wears down, the joint becomes stiff and painful. A variety of treatments are available, depending upon the severity of the condition and lifestyle expectations of the patient.

Other causes of pain in the 1st MTP joint include fractures, dislocations, infection, tumors, and gout. In any case, when pain in this important and complex joint keeps you from being as active as you’d like, call our office for a complete evaluation and diagnosis. Don’t let foot pain keep you from living a healthy and fun-filled lifestyle! 

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- Cut nails straight across — don’t “round off” the corners.
- Don’t allow nails to grow longer than the tip of the toe.
- Don’t “force fit” hand-me-down shoes.
- Make sure shoes are wide enough in the toe box to avoid crowding of the toes. 

Dr. Judge has a unique practice that specializes in complex deformities, chronic pain, the complications of diabetes, sports medicine & related trauma as well as second opinion surgical consultations. She is the first female in Ohio to complete a three-year surgical residency program. Her residency and fellowship training emphasized major reconstructive surgery for the leg, foot and ankle. She is board-certified in reconstructive rear foot and ankle surgery with offices in Ohio and Michigan. Dr. Judge is a Fellow of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons and serves as the Official Foot and Ankle Physician for The Jamie Farr Owens Corning LPGA Classic.