

# FOOTNOTES 2008

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR FALL 2008

## You can avoid the 'shoe blues'

Do your feet hurt more since summertime has ended? You're not alone. We see a lot of patients like you each fall. When it comes time to put the sandals away, these patients get the shoe blues.

In summer, sandals provide the freedom that allows your feet to feel comfortable. If you start wearing closed shoes again in autumn, the shoes can rub against bunions and hammertoes and cause you pain. Sometimes the friction of shoe against skin can cause painful corns and calluses to build up.

Your first line of defense is to wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes. Pick footwear with a toe box wide enough so that your toes aren't crowded together. If you wear shoes with heels, keep the heel height to two inches or less to avoid putting pressure on bunions.

Wear socks to reduce the friction of the shoes against your feet. You may also want to take your shoes to a shoe repair shop and get them stretched in the areas that are bothering you. Using pads to shield the corns may help, but avoid medicated pads, which contain acid that can be harmful.

If you try these tips to no avail, contact our office. There are several things we can do, including:

- Trimming corns and calluses professionally. Don't attempt this yourself because you run the risk of injury and infection.
- Providing custom shoe inserts.
- Injecting corticosteroids, which ease pain and inflammation, or prescribing pain medication.



If conservative measures like these don't give you results, surgery may be an option.

Don't let painful toes keep you from enjoying all that fall has to offer. Make an appointment with our office to get them checked out. 🌿

## Arthritis needn't slow down boomers

Baby boomers aren't ready to slow down, even if their bodies are. If you're a member of the "Me Generation," seek care if you develop joint pain in your toes, feet or ankles.

While there is no fountain of youth for a degenerative condition like arthritis, there are more medical options available than ever before. The earlier your arthritis is diagnosed, the more options are available for treatment.

The big toe joint is one of the most common parts of the foot to develop osteoarthritis. For Boomers with early stage arthritis in this joint, modern surgical procedures may provide more pain relief and increased joint movement, allowing

continued activity.

Boomers with advanced and severe arthritis may need to have the joint fused or replaced. Stronger screws and hardware are helping fusions last longer, while slashing recovery times. A new generation of big toe joint replacements also shows promise.

Ankles are another prime spot for arthritis. Innovative new surgical techniques allow foot and ankle surgeons to transplant small plugs of cartilage from one part of the ankle to another in some patients, slowing joint deterioration.

Ankle replacements, however, are not as durable as hip and knee replacements. The ankle is a more challenging joint to replace. It's smaller and moves in multiple directions. But better, more promising ankle implants are hitting the market.

If you're not ready to give up the running shoes or hiking boots, ask our office for more information on osteoarthritis of the foot and ankle. 🌿



# Go easy on treats, and vigilant on feet

Autumn brings lots of tasty temptations like Halloween candy, Thanksgiving pumpkin pie and holiday cookies. It also marks National Diabetes Month in November, a good reminder for those with diabetes to watch what they eat and keep their blood sugar under control.

People with diabetes also need to check their feet on a daily basis. Small problems, if left untreated, can turn into big problems that require major medical interventions. To prevent this, it's a good idea for diabetics to get regular checkups at our office.

If you have diabetes and feel leg pain at night, or after exercise or walking, that could indicate a blocked artery. Get medical attention right away.

To protect your feet, wear socks that aren't tight or constricting. Always wear shoes or slippers, and shake them out before you put them on. People with diabetes may have nerve damage and may not be able to

feel sharp objects, which could cut them. Because diabetes causes poor circulation, it reduces the body's ability to heal from even a tiny cut.

You can also support a family member who has diabetes by encouraging them to do the following checks, or offering to help with them:

- Inspect diabetic feet daily for cuts, redness and drainage. Watch to see if toe nails have become deformed, discolored or are not growing.
- Look for toes which appear pink, red or purplish, which may be a sign of poor circulation.
- Notice any corns or calluses caused by shoe friction, but don't trim these due to the risk of injury or infection. Make an appointment with our office instead.

Call our office if you notice any signs of trouble, and, if you have diabetes, remember to keep a healthy eating



plan in mind when you smell that pumpkin pie. 🍂