

FOOTNOTES 2007

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR SUMMER 2007



Summer Tips for Fit Feet

Protect your feet this summer! We want you to spend these months enjoying backyard BBQs and relaxing in the pool – not in our office. But remember, pain in your feet is not normal. If you are experiencing pain or notice any of the changes in your feet described here, contact our office for an appointment. We'll help you get back to enjoying your summer.

Feet can get sunburn too. When you're putting on the sunscreen this summer, don't forget your feet. Applying sunscreen to the tops and bottoms of your feet can help protect against malignant melanoma. This serious type of skin cancer can spread to different areas of the body, including your feet and ankles. Early detection is important, so be sure to check your feet regularly. If you find suspicious spots on the soles, between the toes, or under the toenails, call our office right away for an appointment.

Think "ABCD" to detect melanomas:



Asymmetry – The shape of one half does not match the other.



Border – The edges are often ragged, notched, blurred or irregular.



Color – The color is uneven or varies from one area to the other.



5 mm



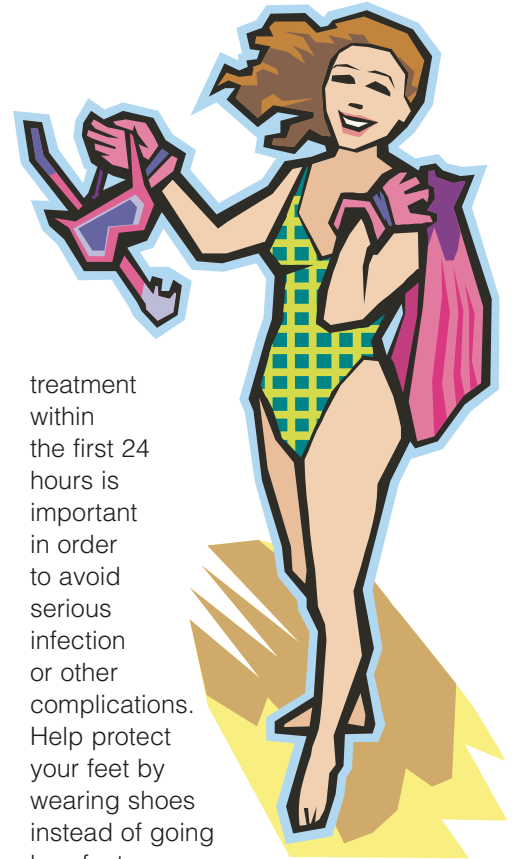
Diameter – Melanomas grow in diameter, whereas moles remain small. A spot larger than the size of a pencil eraser (about 5 millimeters) may be cause for concern.

Avoid going barefoot. Plantar warts, caused by a virus, and fungal infections such as athlete's foot can be painful and annoying. These conditions can be picked up in public places where people go barefoot, such as locker rooms and swimming pools. Try to wear some type of shower shoe around these areas as much as possible. Proper hygiene, including washing your feet with soap and drying completely after a day at the pool, can help prevent problems.

Practice lawnmower safety. Lawnmower blades whirl at 3,000 revolutions per minute and produce three times the kinetic energy of a .357 handgun. And yet people operate these powerful machines wearing sandals or flimsy sneakers. Protect your feet with heavy shoes or work boots while mowing the lawn. Never mow a wet lawn or pull a running mower backwards. Mowing across slopes (not up and down) and keeping the clip bag attached can also help prevent injuries. Remember, mowing the grass is an adult job – keep the kids away from the mower.

Limit the use of flip-flops. Adults and kids don't have to stop wearing flip-flops entirely, but they shouldn't be worn all of the time. Lacking heel cushioning and arch support, these summer shoes can be a leading cause of heel pain.

Always see a doctor for puncture wounds. Any time a foot is punctured by a foreign object such as a piece of glass, a nail, or even a sea shell, it must be treated by a doctor. If you do get a puncture wound, medical



treatment within the first 24 hours is important in order to avoid serious infection or other complications. Help protect your feet by wearing shoes instead of going barefoot.

Keep an eye on those home pedicures. As you try to get those toes looking nice for summer shoes, remember the most common cause of ingrown toenails is improper trimming. Cutting your nails too short can cause the skin next to the nail to fold over the nail. This usually results in pain, swelling, warmth and redness in the toe. If your toe is not infected or if you do not have a medical condition that puts your feet at high risk (i.e. diabetes), you can soak your foot in room-temperature water and gently massage the side of the nail fold to help reduce the inflammation. Don't try to cut the nail. If the pain persists, it's time to call our office. A simple surgical procedure can usually relieve the pain from ingrown toenails. 🌿

What's the Difference Between a Corn and a Callus?

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

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.

When your foot rubs repeatedly against your shoe or sock it 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.

Don't try to remove a corn or callus at home, as serious infection may occur. It is also important to avoid using medicated corn pads. Call our office for an appointment if you are experiencing pain due to a corn or callus and we'll recommend the best treatment for you. 🌱

Men – Are You Smart Sandal Shoppers?

Lots of women wear sandals during the summer months and men are wearing sandals more and more too. Sales of men's sandals grew 20% between 2005 and 2007. However, there is a difference between a good sandal and a bad one in terms of your feet. Choosing the wrong sandal can lead to heel pain, Achilles tendonitis and even breaks or stress fractures in the foot.

Don't look for fashion alone while shopping for a sandal. Men should find a sandal that has a sturdy, cushioned, supportive sole with padded straps to provide the structure needed to help prevent potential foot problems. If you have diabetes, consult us first before wearing sandals.

Foot pain is not normal and should not be ignored. If you have been sporting this summer fashion and your feet hurt, your sandal could be the problem. Call our office for an appointment. 🌱

