

# FOOTNOTES 2005

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR SPRING 2005

## Spring Sports— Don't Let Your Feet Sideline Your Game

From the golf courses to the baseball diamonds, most spring sports give your feet as much of a workout as the rest of your body receives. From your ankles to the tips of your toes, your feet may be sending you important messages both during and after your game.

**Ankles**—Any sport that requires side-to-side motion, such as tennis, or is played on an uneven surface, such as softball or running, presents a risk for ankle injuries. Don't keep playing when you're experiencing ankle pain. The R.I.C.E. method—Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation—should be used immediately to help reduce swelling and pain. But if you think you've sprained your ankle, prompt evaluation and treatment is important; contact our office for an appointment as soon as possible after the injury.

**Achilles tendon**—Athletes who have just started to get back into sports in the spring, or weekend athletes who try to do too much too soon, may suffer from Achilles tendonitis. Pain in the Achilles tendon should be evaluated at the first sign of trouble; left untreated it may progress to a rupture that will require surgery and a lengthy rehabilitation.

**Heels**—Heel pain is a common problem for active people. Although there are several different possible causes for heel pain, the most common, called "plantar fasciitis," results from an overuse of the band of tissue that extends from the heel to the base

of the toes. Stretching exercises, icing and anti-inflammatory medications may take care of the problem, but if it persists for more than a couple of weeks you should make an appointment to have it examined in our office to determine if there is another more serious cause for the problem, such as a stress fracture.

**Arches**—Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction (PTTD), sometimes referred to as "adult acquired flatfoot," is an overuse injury that can be caused by any sport that involves running or walking. PTTD is a progressive condition, which means it will continue to get worse unless it is treated.

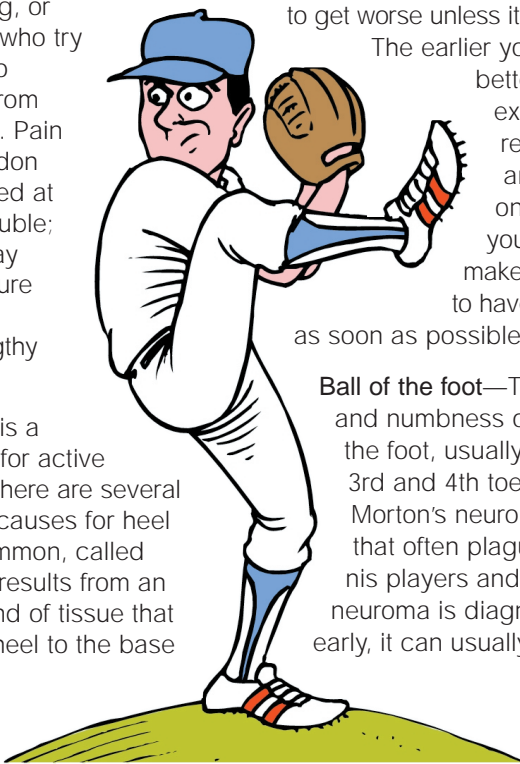
The earlier you catch it, the better, so if you are experiencing pain, redness, warmth and/or swelling on the inside of your foot and ankle, make an appointment to have it checked out as soon as possible.

**Ball of the foot**—Tingling, burning and numbness on the bottom of the foot, usually at the base of the 3rd and 4th toes, is a sign of a Morton's neuroma, a condition that often plagues runners, tennis players and golfers. If the neuroma is diagnosed and treated early, it can usually be taken care of

with non-surgical treatments such as custom orthotic devices or injections. Changes in footwear can help, especially for golfers. Golf shoes should never have a spike located directly beneath the ball of the foot. The pressure from that single spike, magnified by the 15,000 steps taken in an average round of golf, can cause a great deal of pain in your foot.

**Toes**—Bunions, hammertoes, corns and calluses...your toes are just screaming for help! Although the foot type you inherited from your ancestors is the underlying cause of most toe conditions, the shoes that you shove your toes into play a big part in the conditions becoming painful. Athletic shoes that are too short or narrow can force the toes into unnatural positions. But even shoes that are too loose can cause problems when the foot shifts forward as you run, jamming the toes against the end of the shoe. And, although golf is not considered a rigorous sport, when golfers follow through on their swing, they may overextend the big toe joint on the back foot, eventually wearing out the cartilage or jamming the joint, leading to painful arthritis.

Bottom line? Don't let foot pain sideline you this spring. If caught early, most foot problems can be treated without surgery. Contact our office for an appointment at the first sign of trouble. 🏃



# Don't 'Self Treat' Puncture Wounds!

Nails, glass and even sea shells are a threat to bare feet, especially as the weather gets warmer. You may not think much of it when one of these foreign bodies punctures the skin of your foot, especially if you are able to pull it right out. But without professional treatment, a small puncture wound can become a big problem!

Getting proper treatment for a puncture wound within the first 24 hours is important if you are going to avoid a bad infection or other possible complications. Many times a small part of the sharp object remains under the skin after the larger part is pulled out. In addition, sometimes small pieces of skin, socks, or other debris enter the wound at the time of the puncture. Regardless of what the foreign body is, anything that remains in the wound increases your chances of developing other problems, either in the near future or down the road.

A puncture wound must be cleaned properly and monitored throughout the healing process to avoid complications. Even if you have gone to an emergency room for immediate treatment of your puncture wound, make an appointment with our office for a thorough cleaning and careful follow-up. 🩹

