

In This Issue

10 Vacation Tips

Watch for Morton's Neuroma

Weekend Warriors Vulnerable

10 Vacation Tips for Healthy Feet

Nothing ruins a summer vacation faster than a painful or injured foot, but a few simple steps can help keep your feet safe and injury-free so you can enjoy your time off:

- 1. Wear comfortable shoes to the airport.** You never know how long you will wait in line, how far you will walk to the terminal or if you will need to run to make a connecting flight. Loose-fitting flip-flops and sandals increase your risk of tripping, falling and spraining your ankle. Sprains should be evaluated by a foot and ankle surgeon within 24 hours to ensure proper healing.
- 2. Wear socks with your comfortable shoes.** Not only do socks protect skin from shoe friction that can cause blisters and calluses, they can also keep you healthy. Walking barefoot through an airport metal detector exposes your feet to bacteria and viruses that could cause plantar warts and athlete's foot.
- 3. Avoid bringing new shoes on vacation.** If your vacation includes walking tours, hiking or dancing, wear worn-in shoes that support and cushion your feet.
- 4. Check your children's shoes for fit and comfort.** Make sure their shoes are not too big or too small, and ensure that they provide proper arch support and shock absorption.
- 5. Pack flip-flops or sandals and use sparingly.** Use them in place of walking barefoot in locker rooms and around pools, where you may pick up athlete's foot, a plantar wart infection or toenail fungus.
- 6. Pack an antifungal cream or powder.** Use an antifungal product to help prevent athlete's foot if you are staying in a hotel or swimming in public pools.
- 7. Place a towel on the floor before entering the shower or bathtub.** The towel will prevent slipping when you exit and will also help dry toes and protect them from infection.
- 8. Stretch your legs and pump your feet if you are traveling for more than two hours.** This will help circulate the blood to prevent dangerous blood clots in the legs known as deep vein thrombosis (DVT).
- 9. Consider wearing compression socks on the plane.** These can help prevent blood clots and DVT by pushing the blood through the legs and back to the lungs and heart.
- 10. Pack a small first-aid kit.** If you develop a blister, clean your foot with saline solution, apply a small amount of antibiotic cream to the blister and cover it with a Band-Aid or gauze. If you suffer a puncture wound, see a foot and ankle surgeon within 24 hours for professional cleaning of the wound to prevent infection and other complications. To find a foot and ankle surgeon near your vacation spot, visit foothealthfacts.org.



Runners & Joggers: Watch for Morton's Neuroma

Abandoning the gym for a jog or run outside is one of the many perks of summer. But if while hitting the pavement you feel like something is in your shoe or that your sock is bunched up under the ball of the foot, you may have a Morton's neuroma.

This thickening and enlargement of the tissue surrounding the nerve in the ball of the foot is the result of irritation and compression caused by repeated pressure. Symptoms of a Morton's neuroma usually begin gradually and may go away temporarily by massaging the foot or by avoiding shoes or activities that irritate it. Symptoms will get progressively worse over time as the neuroma enlarges and the temporary changes in the nerve become permanent.

If you suspect you have a Morton's neuroma, visit your local foot and ankle surgeon as soon as symptoms develop. Early treatment with padding, icing, orthotics or medications can help you avoid the need for more invasive therapies.

Weekend Warriors Vulnerable to Foot & Ankle Injuries



When it comes to exercise, do you take it easy during the week and then go hard on the weekends? This fitness routine may work well with your schedule, but it can increase your risk of incurring a foot or ankle injury.

If you are a weekend warrior and experience any of the following symptoms, schedule an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon for evaluation, diagnosis and treatment:

- 1. Aching, stiffness, soreness or tenderness above your heel upward to the area just below your calf muscle.** This is a sign of Achilles tendonitis or tendonosis, which often occurs from overuse or from trying to do too much too soon. You may notice pain upon rising in the morning or after periods of rest. This pain typically improves somewhat with motion but later worsens with increased activity.
- 2. Pain, soreness, swelling, bruising or stiffness in the ankle joint that hinders your ability to walk.** These are classic

symptoms of an ankle sprain, an injury to one or more ligaments in the ankle. An ankle sprain's severity depends on whether the ligament is stretched, partially torn or completely torn, as well as on the number of ligaments involved. Ankle sprains are different from strains, which affect muscles rather than ligaments.

Ankle fractures are most often caused by the ankle rolling inward or outward, and they can sometimes occur at the same time as an ankle sprain. If you experience any ankle pain, follow the RICE protocol (Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation) and schedule an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible.

- 3. Protect your feet from bacteria.** Sweaty shoes and public showers at the gym are breeding grounds for bacteria. Never go barefoot while in public areas, and be sure to cover cuts and cracks in the skin or ingrown toenails to help keep out germs. If you have a cut or scrape that becomes infected and does not heal, make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon.
- 4. Painful blisters anywhere on your feet.** Blisters occur from excessive moisture and friction usually caused by nonacrylic socks or poor-fitting and constricting athletic shoes. Your foot and ankle surgeon can evaluate your athletic footwear so blisters do not get in the way of your weekend workout.

To find a Foot & Ankle Surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org.

Avoid Foot Pain During Pregnancy

Many pregnant women believe sore feet are just a side effect of pregnancy, but this is not the case. If you are pregnant, follow these simple tips to help alleviate foot pain and keep your feet more comfortable.

Reduce Swelling

Excess fluid buildup (edema) from the baby's weight and position can make your feet throb and swell. To reduce painful swelling, elevate your feet whenever possible, stretch your legs frequently, wear wide, comfortable shoes and do not cross legs when sitting.

Prevent Arch Pain

Fatigue and flattening of the arch (overpronation) can cause pain in the ligament that holds up the arch of the foot. Prevent arch pain by stretching your calves in the morning and before and after any exercise, do not walk barefoot and be sure to wear supportive low-heeled shoes.

Wear Wider Shoes

Your shoe size can increase during pregnancy thanks to the hormone relaxin, which allows the pelvis to open to deliver the baby. This hormone makes the ligaments in your feet more flexible, causing feet to spread wider and longer and shoes to tighten. Tightly fitting shoes can lead to ingrown toenails, so it is best to wear wider shoes during the last trimester to help prevent this

often painful condition. If you have an ingrown toenail, do not perform "bathroom surgery." Repeated cutting of the nail can worsen over time.

If foot pain persists during your pregnancy, visit your foot and ankle surgeon's office to discuss conservative treatments, such as physical therapy, orthotics, supportive shoes and minor toenail procedures.

