

FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

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WINTER EDITION

KEEPING YOUR FEET HEALTHY DURING THE WINTER

A PMA member podiatrists offer their advice for safeguarding your feet and ankles in cold conditions.

KEEP FEET WARM AND DRY.

APMA member podiatrist Rebecca Sundling, DPM, MPH, advises against layering multiple pairs of socks for warmth, which could affect the fit of your shoes. Instead, invest in the right kinds of socks (see reverse for advice on selecting the right pair).

COLD WEATHER CAN ALSO CAUSE DRY SKIN, WHICH CAN LEAD TO SPLITS AND CRACKS.

Be sure to moisturize your feet to keep them well-hydrated and avoid injuries. “Applying moisturizers can help maintain the integrity of the skin,” Dr. Sundling said.

PEOPLE WITH DIABETES SHOULD TAKE PARTICULAR CARE IN THE COLD WEATHER.

Never use foot warmers, which could cause burns if you have decreased sensation in your feet. Limit time outdoors in extreme temperatures to avoid undetected frostbite.



Ami Sheth, DPM, practices in Los Gatos, CA. All quotes and content were used with her permission.



Rebecca Sundling, DPM, MPH, practices in Holland, MI. All quotes and content were used with her permission.



“The cold conditions of winter truly demand heightened awareness of your environment. I had a patient slip on black ice and break her ankle because she was wearing slippers to go check her mail. She didn’t realize her ankle was broken, and as she tried to return inside, she fell again and broke her foot. The best advice I can give is to stay prepared.”

—APMA member podiatrist Ami Sheth, DPM

Dr. Sheth and Dr. Sundling offered some seasonal wisdom to minimize the risk of injury to your feet and ankles:

BE REALISTIC ABOUT NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

You may have resolved to get moving in the new year, but Dr. Sheth warns not to overdo it or neglect technique. Use the right equipment, wear the right footwear for your activity, and stretch properly. Gradually increase your training as you go to avoid sprains and strains that could cause a major setback.



PURCHASE MOISTURE-WICKING BOOTS AND INVEST IN BAMBOO AND WOOL BLEND SOCKS

Ankles are particularly susceptible to cold weather because they're exposed between your shoe and your clothing, so wear crew or knee socks for full protection. Dr. Sundling notes that wool and bamboo are absorbent and good at keeping moisture away from feet. Wool also has the added quality of providing extra insulation.



WEAR PROPER FOOTWEAR

Don't make the same mistake Dr. Sheth's patient made. Wear boots in slippery and snowy conditions. When purchasing boots, look for a pair with strong teeth that grip the surface to reduce your risk of falling. Be sure all shoes and boots are properly fitted, as well.



LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Numbness is your body's warning system for frostbite. "One episode of frostbite will lead to an increased risk of getting frostbite again," Dr. Sundling said. "It can result in changes in skin, excessive sweating, joint stiffness, and infection. It can even cause permanent nerve damage leading to chronic numbness." Simply put, if you start to lose feeling in your feet, it's time to get inside and warm up.



If you suffer an injury to your foot or ankle this winter, seek help from an APMA member podiatrist right away. Visit www.apma.org to learn more.