

THE FOOT & ANKLE SURGEON



Dr. Richard M. Cowin, DPM

Diplomate, American Board of Podiatric Surgery

Diplomate, American Board of Ambulatory Foot Surgery

Fellow, Academy of Ambulatory Foot & Ankle Surgery

Fellow, American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons

www.advancedfootsurgery.com

WE HAVE MOVED!

We are now located at
10900 S.E. 174th Place,
Summerfield, FL 34491.

Our phone number
remains the same:
(352) 750-6855



Summer hazards to bare feet

Summer is a wonderful time. Warm weather beckons us out of our homes to enjoy the beauty and freshness that nature has to offer. In the yard, the park, or at the beach, it's tempting to take off your shoes and experience the earth by letting your soles touch the grass or the sand.

Hold on a minute! Sure, we want you to revel in the bounty of nature, but we can't help but be concerned about the safety and health of your feet. As wonderful as summer is, it's also filled with hazards that can have adverse effects on feet.

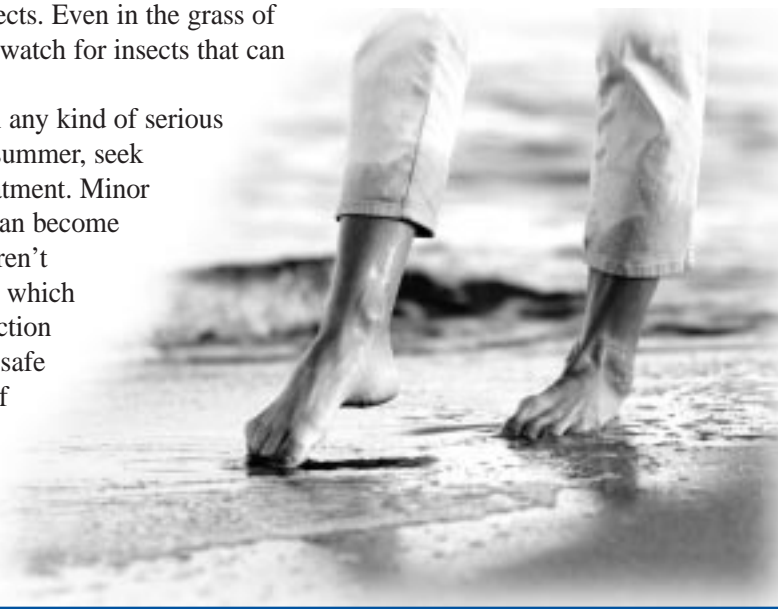
Some of the threats to bare feet are:

☀ **Sunburn**—Even in sandals, the feet need protection from the sun's rays just as the rest of your body does. Whenever you go out with your feet exposed, be sure to use plenty of sunscreen. Don't forget your ankles and the tops of your toes.

☀ **Athlete's foot**—Take precautions when going barefoot in public areas, such as locker rooms and bathhouses. Wear sandals or other shoes to protect your feet. Be sure to dry your feet thoroughly after washing them, since bacteria love warm, moist places.

☀ **Hazardous objects**—Menaces to your feet include broken glass, cigarette butts that aren't quite out, sticks, nails, stinging insects, dumped barbecue coals, hot sand, and a myriad of other nasty things that can hurt your feet. It's essential to be watchful for such things whenever your feet are going unprotected. In public parks and on beaches, be especially watchful for sharp or hot objects. Even in the grass of your own lawn, watch for insects that can sting your feet.

If you sustain any kind of serious foot injury this summer, seek professional treatment. Minor cuts and burns can become serious if they aren't treated properly, which may enable infection to set in. Play it safe by being wary of foot hazards wherever you choose to go barefoot this summer.



Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!



Diabetics— Choose shoes carefully

Diabetic feet need special care, and that extra attention extends to the purchase of footwear. That means taking time to carefully select shoes that fit properly and don't rub or cause irritation. To avoid infection, which is a serious threat to those who are diabetic, shoes should fit well and be completely comfortable.

Feet should be measured each time you buy shoes. Always have your feet measured in a standing position, since bearing your weight can affect the size and width of your feet. When feet are significantly different in size, it may be necessary to buy two pair. This will cost more, but it will be worthwhile if you can avoid problems.

Always purchase shoes that leave approximately half an inch between your big toe and the toe of the shoe. Smaller shoes may cramp the toes. Larger shoes could cause blistering.

Avoid shoes with heels of more than one inch, shoes made of synthetic materials, and shoes that have seams inside that can rub against your skin. Instead, look for leather shoes that will allow your feet to breathe. Buy shoes with solid soles that provide the support you need.

If you have foot problems, such as bunions, be sure the shoes are wide enough to accommodate them. If you aren't sure about a pair of shoes, bring them to us for an inspection. Better to return a pair of shoes than risk an ulcer that could lead to infection, which could trigger dire consequences.

Heal heel pain

When heel pain hits, it's tempting to just take a pain medication or anti-inflammatory drug and wait it out. Unfortunately, doing that could lead to further injury. Instead, you need to take steps to ward off this problem.

Plantar fasciitis (which often is the culprit behind nagging heel pain) is one of those problems of aging that can surprise you. It generally hits after the age of 40, when the ligaments of the foot begin to lose some of their elasticity and can't provide the support they once did. This can lead to pronation (walking more on the insides of your feet), which causes further damage. Eventually, the plantar fascia (the band that runs from the heel to the toes) can become swollen and sore. In severe cases, it may tear.

To help prevent such problems, begin by buying new walking shoes on a regular basis. Don't wait until the shoes have stopped providing the support you need. Next, be sure you're completing your warm-up and stretching before beginning your walk. Muscles that aren't warm and supple are more prone to injury. Don't forget about your feet—stretch from neck to toes. In addition, watch where you're walking. Stick to even terrain to get the exercise you need without risking injury.

If these steps don't resolve your heel-pain problem in a week or so, a visit to our office is in order. We can help you heal heel pain so you can stay active.



How healthy are your feet?

The sooner a foot problem is discovered, the more likely it can be remedied. Checking your feet daily for signs of problems and giving them the tender loving care they need can ensure that your feet stay healthy.

Begin with an inspection

Each day, spend some time looking at your feet. Check for blisters or hot spots. Look for rough places that could be the beginning of corns or calluses. Check nails for any abnormalities. If you see something that doesn't seem right to you or

feel pain in any one area, report it to us. We can help you discover whether there's a real problem to remedy or nothing to be concerned about.

Add a little TLC

Using a pumice stone on a regular basis will help keep your feet soft and supple. By removing dead skin, you can avoid calluses, enabling the new skin underneath to receive the moisture it needs.

Care for nails properly

Nail care is more than trimming straight across. Although it is important to do this to avoid ingrown nails, it's also necessary to push back the cuticles. Healthy cuticles can protect your toes from infection, but they need to be gently pushed back regularly.

With daily care, your feet can stay healthy for years to come. Ask us for more ideas on how to take the very best care of your feet.

Making your sports shoes last

You love the support that your workout shoes provide, but you wish they didn't wear out so quickly. How can you keep them around a little longer?

Start by purchasing quality shoes made of durable materials. Hard carbon outer soles will outlast soft rubber ones. Polyurethane midsoles are a good choice as well.

Buy shoes that are suited to your chosen sport. Remember that tennis shoes are designed to take certain types of stress. They aren't meant for jogging, just as basketball sneakers aren't right for tennis. Your shoes will last longer if you use them for the sport for which they were constructed. If you participate in a number of sports, consider cross-trainers.

Once you start using your new shoes, do your best to keep them dry. Don't walk or run in rain or on wet grass. By avoiding moisture, you can keep the midsoles from deteriorating. Don't leave your shoes in places where they can become too hot or too cold. It may be convenient to leave your workout shoes in the car, but extreme cold can cause the midsoles to become brittle. Keep shoes away from intense heat sources as well. Too much warmth can make mush of the foam in your shoes.

Treat your workout shoes as you would your dress shoes by keeping them in the closet at room temperature.



The back/foot connection

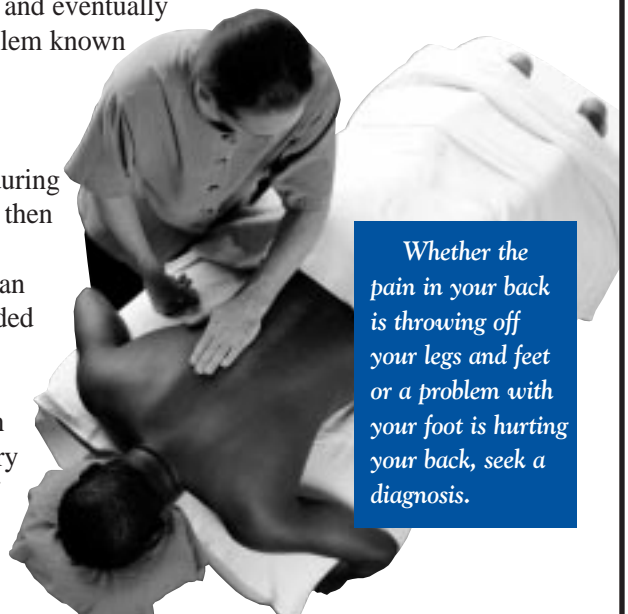
Biomechanical problems in the feet often affect the lower back. When the arch of the foot is too high or too low, the lower back can be thrown out of alignment, causing pain and difficulties with mobility. Conversely, problems with the back—ruptured discs, spinal stenosis, or collapsed vertebrae—can change posture and eventually affect the feet. When the back pain and mobility problems continue, a problem known as “drop foot” can result.

Drop foot (or “foot drop” as it is sometimes called) can be caused by a number of health problems, including diabetes, stroke, and injuries.

Athletes over the age of 30 may experience symptoms of this problem during intense training periods. The problem may resolve itself for some time and then grow steadily worse.

In drop foot, the muscles in the ankle, toe, and foot are affected to such an extent that there is loss of control during walking. The heel strikes with added force, and the body exaggerates other movements in order to help the toes clear the ground.

Several different treatments are available for this problem, depending on the cause. An ankle-foot orthosis (AFO) can help relieve symptoms. Surgery is sometimes recommended. Whether the pain in your back is throwing off your legs and feet or a problem with your foot is hurting your back, it's always best to seek a diagnosis that goes to the root cause of the problem.



Whether the pain in your back is throwing off your legs and feet or a problem with your foot is hurting your back, seek a diagnosis.

**Center for Advanced Foot
& Ankle Surgery**

10900 S.E. 174th Place
Summerfield, FL 34491

*Here's your
foot care newsletter!*

© Copyright 2004. Newsletters, Ink. Corp. Printed in the U.S.A. www.newslettersink.com

**Center for Advanced
Foot & Ankle Surgery**

Dr. Richard M. Cowin, DPM
10900 S.E. 174th Place
Summerfield, FL 34491

Clinic Days & Hours

Mon. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Tues. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Fri. 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Surgery Days & Hours

Wed. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
Thurs. 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Telephone: (352) 750-6855

e-mail:
advfootsurgery@aol.com

Web site:
www.advancedfootsurgery.com



Celebrate summer!

Surgical treatment for neuromas

Neuromas that are located on the bottom of the foot may be corrected with surgery. Oftentimes, surgery is successfully performed after other, more conservative, methods have failed to solve the problem, and recovery is seldom complicated.

A neuroma forms when an area near the front of the foot (usually between the third and fourth toes) is irritated by poor bone structure, arthritis, certain styles of shoes, or an injury. If the area is irritated again and again, the area becomes scarred and the nerve enlarges.

Symptoms of a neuroma include burning, numbness, and pain that comes and goes when standing, walking, or running. The pain may occur at night as well. Some patients describe the pain as similar to having a stone or marble in their shoe. It is the scar tissue that interferes with the function of the nerve, resulting in pain.

When conservative measures fail to relieve the discomfort of a neuroma, surgery may be in order. Generally, this involves removing the nerve tissue that is scarred and then implanting the nerve into a nearby muscle. The procedure is usually done in an outpatient facility, using local anesthesia.

Afterward, the patient may need some anti-inflammatory medications to relieve any discomfort or swelling that occurs over the next few weeks. The use of lasers has significantly improved the success of neuroma surgery.

Neuroma

Nerve pathways

A neuroma forms near the front of the foot, usually between the third and fourth toes.