

# FOOTNOTES2010

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR FALL 2010

## Runners: Stress Fractures Can Slow You Down

With the growing popularity of marathon running, we are seeing more patients with stress fractures of the foot, especially in first-time marathoners.

Many times new runners enter a race with little or improper long-distance training. The lack of experience along with the repetitive impact placed on the feet during the run can produce enough stress to cause hairline breaks in the bones of your foot.

If you have started running or are entering your first marathon, we recommend you follow these guidelines to help prevent injury:

**Don't increase your mileage or change to a more intense phase of training too quickly.** The increased force placed on the bones in your feet make them more susceptible to stress fractures. A general rule of thumb is to increase your mileage by no more than 10 percent each week.

**Take adequate rest time between runs** to decrease your risk of injury.

**Wear properly fitting shoes** that provide adequate support to your feet. If you suffer from abnormal mechanics in the foot, such as overpronation or hypermobility, custom orthotics can also help prevent injury.

Stress fractures can occur anywhere in the foot and can eventually lead to a complete break of the bone if left untreated. The signs of a stress fracture can include pain, swelling, and redness and possible bruising. Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to walk on a foot with a fracture, so just because you're able to walk does not mean there isn't a more serious problem.

Remember, early diagnosis and treatment are important to ensure proper healing. If you suspect a break, immediately follow the RICE protocol — **R**est, **I**ce, **C**ompression



and **E**levation. If pain and swelling last longer than a few days, a visit to our office is in order.

In most cases, treatment includes rest and immobilization with casting of the foot. Surgery may be required in certain instances to repair and stabilize a stress fracture that has progressed into a full fracture. 🌱

## Sandals to Shoes

### Make Sure it's a Comfortable Switch

It's almost time to say good-bye to your sandals, slip-on shoes and bare feet of summer and hello to socks, shoes and boots. Our patients find that the change in shoes and season can bring unwanted foot problems, including:

**Ingrown toenails**  
Ingrown toenails can result from wearing improperly-sized shoes. Trim your toenails as straight across as possible and wear shoes that are not tight around your toe area.

#### **Toenail fungus**

Fungus thrives in dark, moist, warm environments such as your shoes. Wearing the same shoes every day can promote fungal growth. Disinfect your shoes and wear different pairs to try to avoid fungus.

#### **Neuroma flare-ups**

Neuromas, or nerve pain, may be triggered by tight-fitting, enclosed shoes. Make sure your shoes provide enough room in the toe area to avoid tight-fitting areas and irritation.

#### **Bunion, bone spur, hammertoe irritation**

Constant rubbing on your feet from shoes can irritate any existing hammertoes, bunions or bone spurs. Wear socks and properly fitting shoes. Sometimes having your shoe stretched in the areas of irritation can also provide some relief.

If you're experiencing discomfort from your seasonal shoe switch, schedule an appointment with our office. 🌱



# Care for Your Feet This Holiday Season

The holiday season will soon be upon us and it will be easy to forget about taking care of our health, especially the state of our feet. This can be a particularly serious problem for those with diabetes. In the season of festivities and celebrations, it is easy to indulge in food and drink, forgetting the all important diabetic diet. It's essential for those with diabetes to remember to pay attention to their feet, no matter the season, to detect any potential problems.



During this busy time of year, we find ourselves walking more at the mall, dancing at parties, running extra errands — many times in dress shoes that aren't worn very often. All these added activities can cause swelling and, in turn, friction between your feet and shoes. The friction can cause blisters, calluses or abrasions on your feet and can lead to diabetic ulcers and infection. This can be especially true if your body's defenses are down due to elevated blood sugar levels from overindulgence of holiday cheer. Infections can spread quickly and may require hospitalization and possibly amputation of the toe, foot or leg if not properly cared for early.

Even diabetics who follow recommended guidelines during the holidays can suffer from the complications of diabetes and are still at risk for wounds in the feet. For that reason, it is extremely important that all diabetics inspect their feet daily and look for the following warning signs:

- **Ingrown toenails** that cut into the skin and that can cause infections
- **Red, purple, gray or black areas** on the feet that can be due to shoes that are too small, swollen feet, or fluid retention of the legs and feet
- **Blisters** caused by rubbing from shoes or seams in socks
- **Calluses** on the toes or bottom of the feet
- **Skin with signs of dryness** or cracking
- **Sudden swelling and heat** of one foot without obvious trauma

Give yourself the greatest gift of foot health this holiday season — if you detect a wound or any other irritation, don't delay. Make an appointment with our office as soon as possible. 🍀