



ASPMA
Re-Certification
Questionnaire

The Podiatric Assistant is usually the first and, most of the time, the last person a patient comes in contact with in a Podiatric office. Therefore, we are often asked questions about the feet and about the circumstances surrounding their care. The following is a short course in “feet.” Let’s play –

MEET YOUR FEET

The foot is an intricate structure designed for strength and flexibility. Each foot contains 26 bones. Together, the 52 bones of the feet make up about one quarter of all the bones in the body. Thirty-three joints, more than a hundred ligaments, tendons and muscles hold the structure together and allow it to move in a variety of ways. The foot’s bony structures form three weight bearing points: at the heel, at the base of the little toe, and at the base of the great toe. This tripod formation helps to give each foot balance.

When you step, the body’s weight is borne by the foot in a path that touches all three points. A step starts at the heel, moves to the outside of the foot, then shifts again towards the base of the great toe. Whether walking or standing, these areas of the foot bear most of the body’s weight.

Toes help us maintain this balancing act. And when we move, a whole network of muscles, bones and other tissues from toe to calf go to work. To feel the whole apparatus operate, slowly curl your toes under. The foot is connected to the leg by ligaments that join the ankle to the long bones of the leg, and by the Achilles tendon that runs up the back of the leg and ties your calf muscles to the heel bone. Although every foot contains the same general structure, no two feet are exactly alike.

What Makes Feet Hurt?

Sore feet can keep a person from concentrating on their work, can cause them to be grumpy, and can have a physical impact on knees, hips and lower back.

Most of us start life with trouble-free feet. What goes wrong? Of hundreds of known foot ailments, many can be traced to four of the most common causes: heredity, improper foot care, injury (including that caused by shoes and socks or stockings that don’t fit well) and the effects of aging. Women have about four times as many foot problems as men; high heeled shoes are often the culprit.

Human feet were designed for standing and walking which are natural activities that shouldn’t produce discomfort. The American Podiatry Association reports that the average person will walk several miles a day, and about 115,000 miles in a lifetime – more than four times the earth’s circumference. During each day, you’ll probably take 8 or 10 thousand steps on pavement, floor, tile and other surfaces. With each step, a gravity-induced pressure of about 3-4 times the body’s weight bears down on each foot – so if you weight 150 pounds, that adds up to more than half a tone of pressure during a day.

Constant weight-bearing over the years may cause feet to spread – especially across the ball of the foot. The older we get, the wider the forefoot is apt to become. Your patients may find they need a wider width shoe as they age. They must be sure the shoe fits, before they wear it.

Getting To Know Your Feet

Think how many activities depend on feet. From your first baby steps that helped you explore your world, to the sports that mark your leisure hours, to the slight foot pressure that helps control the movement of your car, feet are essential to daily life. Because we use them so much throughout our lives, feet are one of the most often injured areas of the body. And the National Center for Health Statistics says that among the most common problems are corns and calluses.

Corns and Calluses --

Corns and calluses are caused by friction and pressure from skin rubbing against bony areas when wearing shoes. If the first signs of soreness are ignored, corns and calluses rise up as nature's way of protecting sensitive areas. Corns form on the toes, while both may appear on soles. Neither calluses nor corns have roots under the skin; they are simply layers of compacted, dead skin cells. However, the pressure of this hard mass on sensitive nerves in the skin can be painful. At the first sign of tenderness moleskin pads may be used to help protect the area. As a preventive measure, be sure shoes fit properly. If pain persists, they will usually become your patient.

Foot Weakness --

Foot weakness can occur from overweight, excessive walking, running or standing for long periods of time. That's why it's so important to be sure the foot is properly supported. When ligaments that hold the bones in their natural position become strained, the foot and ankle can become fatigued or swollen. Supportive devices inserted in shoes may bolster feet and help relieve symptoms of weakness. Regular foot exercises may help strengthen muscles and improve foot function.

Foot Odor --

Foot odor is called bromidrosis. It often results from excessive perspiration. Bromidrosis powders with special ingredients can help lessen the odor, but professional treatment is required to eliminate the problem. Foot powder, or a deodorant foot spray, and sandals or other well ventilated shoe styles can help keep feet drier, and less odorous. Daily hygiene is essential. There are

approximately 250,000 sweat glands in a pair of feet, pouring out half a pint of moisture each day – much of that moisture stays in the shoe, where it can eat away at shoe materials and cause inside-shoe odor. Change shoes often to let each pair “air out”; wear clean socks to help absorb perspiration.

Bunions --

A bunion, an unsightly deformity at the big toe joint, causes the big toe itself to slant outward at an angle. Most shoes aren't made to accommodate bunions, so the area often becomes irritated, with redness and swelling. Bunions can be inherited, but wearing shoes that are too narrow in the forefoot and toe, or wearing high heels often and for long periods of time, can affect a bunion's development. Sometimes bunions are a sign of developing arthritis in older people. Self-care includes wearing shoes that don't cramp at the metatarsal and toe area, and soaking feet in warm water to relieve pain. If symptoms continue, patients will usually seek your help. Treatments recommended by your podiatrist may include special shoes, orthotics, or surgery to realign the toe.

Athlete's Foot --

Athlete's foot, a fungal infection, usually starts between toes, where the skin is warm, moist, and hidden from light, and often spreads to other areas of the foot. Symptoms like painful itching between toes, cracked or scaly skin, small blisters and red, irritated skin patches require attention. The best way to help prevent athlete's foot infection is to keep feet clean and dry with a daily washing. Be especially careful to dry between toes. Use a foot powder to help feet stay drier throughout the day. Although athlete's foot may respond to foot medications, it may require care of your podiatrist.

Toenails --

Toenails whose corners are crowded by the skin can cause pain and become “ingrown.” To prevent ingrown toenails, nails should be trimmed straight across with toenails clippers. Corners should not be rounded off. The nail should project just past the end of the toe to protect it from pressure and irritation. After clipping, it may be necessary to smooth nails with a file or emery

board. Sometimes, the pain of an ingrown toenail can be eased by wearing open-toed sandals and soaking feet in warm water once or twice a day. If this is unsuccessful it may require care of your podiatrist.

Hammertoes --

“Hammertoe” is a hooked or claw-like deformity that affects millions, and the most common forms are acquired. Shoes or stockings that cramp the toes may be a factor in its eventual development. Toe joints contract, and over a period of time, a bulge forms at the top of the joint. Hammertoes can affect overall balance and comfort. Wear properly fitted shoes with plenty of toe room, and well-proportioned stockings that do not constrict toes. In advanced cases, surgery can usually correct the deformity.

Blisters --

Blisters can develop when skin is subjected to friction. At the first sign of pain or redness on skin, moleskin padding may be applied. Keep feet dry, and wear a cushioning layer of socks between feet and shoes. If blisters do occur, don't pop them! You may cause infection. If a blister breaks on its own, carefully wash the area, apply antiseptic, cover with a sterile bandage during the day, and uncover it at night to let skin “breathe.” If redness or swelling develops, a doctor should see them at once.

Heel Pain --

Heel pain occurs most frequently when there's too much stress on the heel bone itself from walking or jumping and landing on hard surfaces, or when the plantar fascia is inflamed. (The fascia is a long band of connecting tissue that passes from the heel to the metatarsal bones, under the long arch of the foot.) Inflammation caused by excessive stretching of the tissue may also cause a heel “spur” at the base of the heel. If pain persists, care by a podiatrist will be required.

Poor Blood Circulation --

Poor blood circulation is a major podiatric concern. This condition may be marked by persistent, unusual feeling of cold, numbness, tingling, burning, or fatigue in feet and legs. Other symptoms may include discolored skin, dry skin, absence of hair on feet or legs, or cramping or

tightness in leg muscles. Feet should be bathed daily and blotted, not rubbed dry. Emollients, cocoa butter or lanolin cream may be applied to help skin retain moisture and stay softer. Soak brittle toenails before clipping and filing them. Keep warm, exercise moderately, and have periodic medical and podiatric exams.

Diabetes --

Poor blood circulation and diminished sensitivity are complications of diabetes, making diabetics especially vulnerable to foot problems. Keep feet warm and wear non-restrictive shoes. Check daily for cuts or cracks, which could develop into an ulcer or gangrene, and see a podiatrist about even the simplest foot problem. Diabetics should avoid cutting corns and calluses and using any remedy containing salicylic acid. This ingredient is listed on labels of certain corn remedies, with a warning against its use by diabetics. Trim toenails carefully to avoid breaking the skin or producing an ingrown nail or consult your podiatrist for this care.

Arthritis --

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, a leading cause of activity limitation in older people is impairment of the legs and feet. Older muscles and bones lose resiliency and do not absorb shock very well. Although arthritis affects all age groups, osteoarthritis (usually caused by the wear and tear of the joints that comes with age) often affects older feet and inhibits movement. Proper foot care, including regular visits to a podiatrist and proper padding to cushion feet, are especially important for seniors.

Plantar Warts --

Plantar warts are caused by a virus, which may invade the sole of the foot through cuts and breaks in the skin. Walking barefoot on dirty pavements or littered ground can expose feet to this painful skin infection. The condition is common among children but may occur in adults. It may require extended treatment and can interfere with school and sports activities.



JANUARY 2008 JOURNAL CLINICAL/ADMINISTRATIVE ANSWER SHEET

This answer sheet contains 30 questions (double the usual amount); credits have been adjusted to give you 10 CME credits if all questions are answered correctly (decreasing if less questions are answered correctly). The questions will apply for CME credit for the 2009-2010 recertification year. All completed answer sheets should be held until you receive your recertification notice in the mail (April of 2009). At that time, attach all JOURNAL answer sheets to your notice and mail to:

Janet B. Grace, PMAC
3844 Emerson Drive
Schiller Park, IL 60176

From the article above, answer these questions

1. Each foot contains _____ bones
2. The bones of both feet make up about _____ of all the bones in the body.
3. The joints of the foot are held together by more than a hundred _____, _____, and _____.
4. What are the three weight bearing points of the foot which give the foot balance?

5. We maintain our balance with the help of _____.
6. What are the four most common causes of foot problems?

7. The average person will walk about _____ in a lifetime.
8. What is the amount of gravity-induced pressure that is exerted with each step?

9. The older we get, the _____ the forefoot is apt to become.
10. _____ and _____ are reported by the National Center for Health Statistics as being among the most common health problems.

11. Corns and calluses are caused by _____ and _____.

12. Corns and calluses have roots under the skin. TRUE _____ FALSE _____

13. Fatigue and swelling of the foot and ankle can sometimes be attributed to ligaments becoming _____.

14. Foot odor is called _____.

15. Two easily obtained products can sometimes help with foot odor. They are –

16. There are approximately _____ sweat glands in a pair of feet.

17. What causes the big toe to slant outward at an angle? _____

18. Bunions can be inherited, but there are other reasons for their development. They are =

19. Fungal infections usually start where? _____

20. What conditions found on our feet contribute to athlete's foot?

21. What symptoms are associated with athlete's foot?

22. A hooked or claw-like deformity of the toes is called a _____.
23. When toe joints _____ a bulge forms at the top of the joint.
24. Blisters can develop when skin is subjected to _____.
25. The best way to get rid of a blister is to pop them. TRUE _____ FALSE _____
26. Heel pain occurs most frequently when there's too much _____ on the heel bone itself.
27. Persistent, unusual feeling of cold, numbness, tingling, and burning indicates what condition?

28. Patients with diabetes often experience poor blood circulation and _____
_____.
29. Osteoarthritis is usually caused by the _____ and _____ of the joints that comes with age.
30. Plantar warts are caused by a _____.

30 – 28 correct answers == 10 credits

- 27 – 25 correct answers == 9 credits
- 24 – 22 correct answers == 8 credits
- 21 – 19 correct answers == 7 credits
- 18 - 16 correct answers == 6 credits
- 15 -- 13 correct answers == 5 credits
- 12 -- 10 correct answers == 4 credits
- 9 -- 7 correct answers == 3 credits
- 6 -- 4 correct answers == 2 credits
- 3 -- 1 correct answers == 1 credit

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