

## Dry skin season

Cooler weather often means drier skin. When there's less moisture in the air, skin reacts by becoming dry and sometimes chapped. Almost everyone deals with mild skin dryness in the colder months, but severe dryness of the skin on the feet can be a real problem when it leads to cracking and infection.

Very dry skin can be the result of an allergic reaction or psoriasis. It can also be related to a systemic disease such as diabetes or thyroid disease. Many people notice their skin becoming increasingly dry as they age or when the humidity in their house is very low, as it is in winter.

Athlete's foot is sometimes mistaken for dry skin, but athlete's foot will cause blistering. If blistering occurs, you probably have more than a case of dry skin, and a professional diagnosis should be sought.

Treatment for dry skin will depend on the specific cause of the problem. Water is naturally present in the skin to help it retain elasticity and smoothness. A certain amount of water is necessary for healthy skin, but soaking in the tub or standing in the shower too long can actually cause dryness. After normal bathing, dry the feet thoroughly—especially between the toes.

Choose an oil-based moisturizer, since the ones that contain alcohol can dry skin. Avoid using moisturizer between toes, since it can encourage bacterial growth. Moisturizing at bedtime and wearing socks to bed can sometimes be effective. Wearing shoes that are comfortable and don't rub or pinch toes can help you avoid corns and calluses.

If dry skin persists or worsens, or you notice a rash or other foot problems developing, don't hesitate to seek professional podiatric treatment. Severe cracking or signs of infection should also prompt you to call our office. Dry skin symptoms needn't persist until spring. Ask us for more ideas on how to keep your skin soft and supple all winter long.

*Winter doesn't  
have to mean  
alligator feet.  
Take steps now  
to keep your skin  
soft even as you  
feel the first chill.*



## EXERCISE WITH CARE

Exercise is good for your whole body. However, because your feet and ankles generally play a major role in any exercise program you undertake, they'll need special attention before, during, and after your workout.

Be sure to warm up and stretch prior to any exercise, and include feet and ankles in this process. Start out slow and work your way up. If you find yourself feeling fatigued, listen to your body and take a break. Drink plenty of fluids to stay well hydrated. Choose sport-specific shoes that provide the support you need.

If you have any preexisting foot or ankle conditions, visit us before you begin your exercise program. We can help you avoid secondary injuries and other discomforts by prescribing treatment, including orthotics, to keep you on your feet so you can fulfill your exercise goals.



*Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!*

# What's keeping you out of cute shoes?

Women love cute shoes. There's simply no denying it. Even some women who generally purchase quality low-heeled footwear will occasionally opt for high heels. Unfortunately, for some women, even indulging their inner "shoe aficionada" on rare occasions is out of the question.

For women who suffer from certain foot ailments—[bunions](#), [corns](#), [calluses](#)—sliding into a cute pair of shoes for a friend's wedding or for a night on the town can be downright painful. With certain deformities, such as hammertoes and bunions, it may not even be possible to fit the shoe to the foot. Fortunately, help is available.

Corns and calluses may respond to a variety of in-office treatments. Often these procedures are enough to relieve the discomfort and enable the patient to wear a wider variety of footwear. Both bunions and hammertoes can generally be treated with day surgery. With hammertoes, this means realigning the bone to improve both the look and function of the toes. Bunion surgery does something similar, but for the joint of the big toe. These surgeries require significant recovery time, but most patients are happy with the results.

Think maybe it's time to change your feet to fit your fancy? You could be walking more comfortably...and in shoes you really love. When you think about having treatment to relieve the discomfort of corns or bunions, consider all the benefits you'll be able to enjoy afterward. You may decide that surgery is right for you after all.



## CH, CH, CH CHANGES in your feet...and ankles

If you were 12 years old when David Bowie released the song "Changes" in 1972, you've already reached middle age, and you're probably starting to notice some changes in your body. Along with the rest of the changes you're experiencing with age, your feet and ankles are changing, too.

Feet and ankles are known for changing in several ways as we age. Chief among these are:

- The cushioning thins (especially on the bottoms of the feet and at the heels).
- The elasticity of the tendons, ligaments, and skin diminishes.
- Injuries and infections occur more often.
- The feet spread out. In many cases, shoe size changes.

Most Americans complain of sore feet and ankles as they age. However, the normal aging process should not include foot pain. Generally, foot pain is related to a particular problem. Foot problems can have a number of causes, including genetics, obesity, and poor shoe choices. Couple these with years of standing on hard surfaces or wearing high heels, and the situation intensifies. Common foot and ankle disorders among the aged include arthritic pain, heel spurs, nail deformities, and bunions.

No matter what your age, caring for your feet and ankles is important. With good daily and regular professional care, many foot and ankle conditions associated with aging can be avoided. Take steps now to prevent foot and ankle pain. Call us to learn how.



*With good daily care and regular professional care, many foot and ankle problems can be avoided.*



## Healthy feet?

How healthy are your feet and ankles? It isn't always easy to tell. Check off any statements that apply to you to assess your foot and ankle health.

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|--|---|
| 1. ___ I am 45 or older.   | 8. ___ It seems like I'm always twisting my ankle.          |
| 2. ___ I am 25 or more pounds overweight.                                      | 9. ___ I've had corns or calluses at least once in my life. |
| 3. ___ For most of my life, I have been on my feet six to eight hours per day. | 10. ___ I suffer with bunions or hammertoes.                |
| 4. ___ I wear heels of three inches or more almost daily.                      | 11. ___ My legs cramp, and my feet are often cold.          |
| 5. ___ A good workout is when I get off the couch to go to the refrigerator.   | 12. ___ I have flat feet.                                   |
| 6. ___ I've had to give up some activities because of foot or ankle pain.      | 13. ___ I have very high arches.                            |
| 7. ___ I have diabetes or a family history of diabetes.                        | 14. ___ I often suffer from heel pain.                      |
|  | 15. ___ I have arthritis in my feet and ankles.             |

If you didn't check a single one of these, congratulations! Chances are good that you have healthy feet. But if you should suffer a foot problem, don't hesitate to call our office. If you checked five or more, it's probably a good idea to see a professional podiatrist. Wear and tear on your feet can add up to some painful problems, but with treatment, many people find relief from their foot ailments.

## Enhance healing with ActiPatch™

ActiPatch™ is a remarkable advancement in relieving [heel pain](#) through the use of electromagnetic therapy. This type of therapy has been utilized extensively for two decades and been found to be a safe and effective way to reduce discomfort. Specifically, ActiPatch is known for its ability to reduce inflammation and swelling.

The concept behind ActiPatch is to use a pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) at minimal power to rejuvenate tissue and reduce swelling. Damaged tissues often break down on a cellular level. Fluid leakage and debris collection from this process mean inflammation and discomfort for the patient. ActiPatch can help relieve these symptoms by creating an optimal environment for healing.

ActiPatch is recommended for specific podiatric diagnoses such as plantar fasciitis and certain sports injuries. We've found that our patients love ActiPatch because it works so quickly to relieve their discomfort and facilitate healing. If you're suffering from heel pain or a sports injury, ask us about how you can experience the ActiPatch advantage.



## Basketball

### Don't score a foot injury

Basketball is hard on feet and ankles in two ways:

■ First, acute injuries often result when landing improperly after jumping.

■ Second, chronic injuries develop gradually when an athlete doesn't warm up before playing.

Acute injuries can happen quite accidentally. Sometimes a player twists in the air and lands awkwardly. These types of injuries can't always be avoided.

Chronic injuries are a different story, however. These are often the result of not stretching and warming up before practice or a game. Wearing the wrong shoes—especially those that don't provide proper ankle support—can be disastrous. The right shoes are designed and constructed specifically for the sport of basketball. In addition to good ankle support, plenty of cushioning to absorb the shock of landing on everything from wood to asphalt to concrete is essential.

Replace shoes regularly. If you're playing or practicing five days out of seven in the same shoes, don't expect them to last more than three months. Don't wait until the soles are worn smooth or the uppers have broken down. Remember that your shoes are protecting your feet on the court, and you need the support they provide.

Areas of the feet that are commonly injured while playing basketball include the Achilles tendon, plantar fascia, and sesamoid. These problems require professional diagnosis and treatment. Acute injuries, such as fractures and sprained ankles, need immediate attention. Seek first aid, and then secure a professional diagnosis.

Get the ActiPatch advantage for enhanced healing for your heel pain!

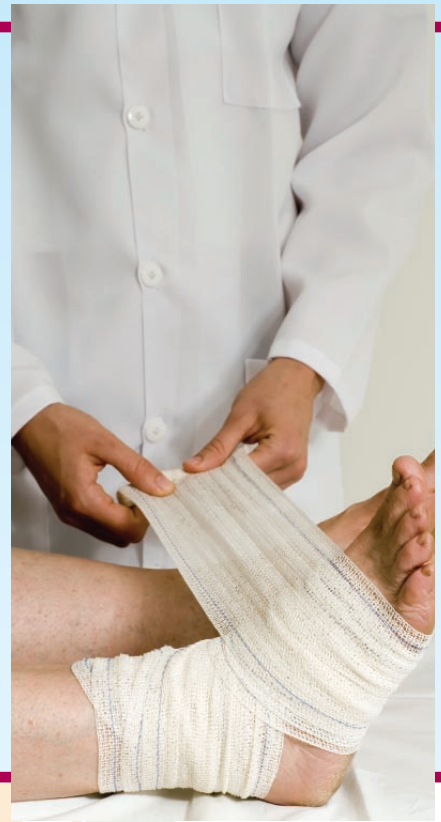
# ANKLE INJURIES

“Talus” is the technical name for the ankle bone. An osteochondral injury to the talus occurs when the ankle bone is pushed against the tibia (the leg bone above it) during a sprain. When this happens, the cartilage between the two bones may crack, allowing a cyst to form on the talus.

This particular type of talus injury is not easy to diagnose. It can result from what may appear to be a very minor injury, and the condition itself can range from mild to severe. In very serious cases, bone and cartilage may actually dislodge from the joint.

When a cyst has formed, treatment is necessary. Arthroscopy is a common treatment. In this procedure, several very tiny incisions are used in conjunction with a telescopic device that allows surgeons to view the joint. Minuscule instruments are used to work on the cyst. In another procedure, parts of the bone are replaced with autologous bone donation or bone from another donor. This bone is then grafted in place. In the most serious cases, there may be no choice but to fuse the ankle.

Ankle injuries are never fun, but when osteochondral injury of the talus is present, the results can be painful and even disabling. Never ignore an ankle injury. If you aren't sure how to treat one appropriately, call us. We can perform an examination, including x-rays if necessary, and recommend appropriate treatment to help you heal.



## PLANTAR WARTS—no time for the pain!

Plantar warts are different from warts you find elsewhere on the body because they are found only on the soles (plantar surface) of the feet. This is an important distinction because it's their location that makes them painful. The pressure of your body weight squeezing the wart between you and the floor causes plantar warts to be downright unpleasant.

Plantar warts are caused by a variation of human papillomavirus—the same virus known to cause certain cancers. In spite of this commonality, plantar warts aren't dangerous, but they can be bothersome. Papillomavirus is quite pervasive and is often found on the skin, but it's only when it permeates the surface that a wart grows.

Often, plantar warts are confused with corns or calluses—both of which can occur on the bottoms of the feet. Sometimes they erupt in clusters, and they often have black spots within their rounded borders. Having plantar warts diagnosed early, while they're still small, usually translates to more effective treatment.

Professional treatment for plantar warts may include cryotherapy, surgery, or laser treatment. Each of these has been shown to be effective, but the treatment that is chosen will correspond to your particular case. Don't let plantar warts slow you down when treatment is available. Call us to say “good-bye” to them for good!

### Common warts, flat warts...and Hogwarts

While plantar warts tend to be flat, common warts usually stick out from the skin. Common warts range from flesh-colored to a grayish hue and are generally rough to the touch.

Flat warts are similar to plantar warts in their lack of dimension, but they are usually found on the face. They are as large as a fourth of an inch in diameter and often spread quickly.

Hogwarts is a mythical castle and the setting for parts of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. It bears no relationship to warts found anywhere on the human body, but the author has suggested that it may be related to the hogwort plant, which is an annual covered in light-brown, woolly hairs that prefers sandy soil.

