

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle
27901 Woodward Ave.
Suite 110
Berkley, MI 48072
(248) 545-0100
MichiganFootCare.com

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Lee Hoffman, DPM
Brian Kissel, DPM
Charles Kissel, DPM
Aimee Popofski, DPM
David Ungar, DPM
Marc Weitzman, DPM

Avoid Frostbite

Frostbite occurs when a body part is exposed to extreme cold. The feet, hands, ears and nose are particularly prone to frostbite due to their location away from the body's core.

Mild exposure to cold typically produces pain and irritation of the skin. Greater exposure may produce blistering and reversible damage to the outer skin layers. Eventually, there will be complete loss of sensation and permanent damage to all layers of the skin, arteries, muscles and tendons.

Frostbite can be prevented by limiting exposure and keeping the feet as warm and dry as possible. If, however, frostbite is suspected, the feet should be rapidly rewarmed by immersion in warm, not hot, water. Avoid vigorous rubbing and dry heat (such as from a hair dryer), as burns may result if numbness is present. To avoid infection, blisters or damaged skin should be treated with antibiotic cream and loose bandages.

Frostbite is a very serious injury that can cause significant damage to feet. Prompt diagnosis and proper treatment by your NorthPointe doctor is essential. In severe cases, surgery is sometimes necessary.



Treatment

See your NorthPointe doctor as soon as possible if you think that you have a stress fracture in your foot or ankle. Ignoring the pain can have serious consequences

including breaking the bone completely.

Until your appointment, follow the RICE protocol:

- **Rest.** Avoid activities that put weight on your foot
- **Ice.** Apply ice immediately after the injury to keep the swelling down. Use cold packs for 20 minutes at a time, several times a day. Do not apply ice directly on your skin
- **Compression.** To prevent additional swelling, lightly wrap the area in a soft bandage
- **Elevation.** As often as possible, rest with your foot raised up higher than your heart

WINTER STRESS FRACTURES

Injuries from slips and falls greatly increase during the winter months. Stress fractures, a small crack in a bone, are one of the more common winter-related injuries.

According to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, stress fractures can occur due to a wide variety of circumstances. Athletes are most commonly affected, as repetitive weight-bearing activities like walking, running, and jumping, are often sources of stress on the foot. But in the winter months, slippery walking conditions and seasonal sports like ice skating, snowboarding and sledding are some of the leading causes of foot-related injuries.

Symptoms

The most common symptom of a stress fracture in the foot or ankle is pain. The pain usually develops gradually and worsens during weight-bearing activity. Other symptoms may include:

- Pain that diminishes during rest
- Pain that occurs and intensifies during normal, daily activities
- Swelling on the top of the foot or on the outside of the ankle
- Tenderness to touch at the site of the fracture
- Possible bruising

- In addition, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen or naproxen, can help relieve pain and reduce swelling.



Taking time away from certain activities may be needed for six to eight weeks. Usually exercise

can continue, but only as directed by your podiatrist.

Additional measure may need to be taken:

- Modifications to shoes with a stiff shoe insert or boot walker
- Possible casting or use of crutches
- Calcium and vitamin D supplements may be prescribed

Most stress fractures will heal with the conservative measures outlined above, but there are instances when surgery is needed. Your Northpointe Foot & Ankle doctor will discuss the treatment plan best for you.

Prevention

The following can help prevent stress fractures:

- Be mindful of slippery and uneven surfaces. Use a cane or other walking aid to help navigate through potentially hazardous areas
- Wear boots with rubber soles and deep grooves for the best traction in snow
- Select the proper footwear for the specific type of exercise
- Start out slowly when beginning an exercise program following a layoff period
- Walk and stretch to warm up gradually before running or walking
- Take the time to cool down properly after exercise

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Cold Weather Foot Concerns

Each season effects our feet in different ways. Keeping your feet healthy during the winter months may include the following:

- **Cracked Heels/Dry Skin** is the most common cold weather foot complaint. Also called “heel fissures,” the cracks look unsightly and can be painful when you’re on your feet. The simplest way to prevent heel cracks and other areas of dry skin on your feet is to apply moisturizing cream, especially after a shower. But that may not be enough. Shoes or boots with solid heel counters can help prevent heel cracks, as can padded socks that cushion the heel from impact that may increase pressure in the heel area. Your NorthPointe doctor can help you choose the best form of treatment for your cracked heels.
- **Only wear proper fitting footwear** appropriate for the activity. Properly fitted skates and boots can help prevent blisters, chafing, and ankle or foot injuries. Likewise, if socks are too small, they can force toes to bunch together, and that friction can cause painful blisters or corns. Make sure your ski or snowboard boots fit properly; you should be able to wiggle your toes, but the boots should immobilize the heel, instep, and ball of your foot.
- **Boots are must-have footwear in winter.** Between the waterproof



material of the boots themselves and the warm socks you wear to keep toes warm, you may find your feet sweat a lot. Damp, sweaty feet can chill more easily and are more prone to bacterial infections. To provide warmth, ski sock liners worn under regular socks are a way to keep feet warmer

without adding bulk. Choose 100% polyester, or wool fiber, socks. They will keep feet warmer and drier than 100% cotton.

- **Biomechanical problems** of the foot, such as over-pronation, can increase the risk of injury to skiers and snowboarders. Ask your Northpointe doctor if orthoses can be used to correct the biomechanics of your foot in your ski boot. This could minimize your risk of injury.

Wishing you a Happy, Healthy
New Year! **2019**

THANK YOU For Warming Up Your Neighbors!

From November 12 to December 7, NorthPointe Foot & Ankle joined the Berkley Senior Center to collect new gloves, hats, scarves and socks for all ages.

This was the eighth year that the two organizations have partnered to host the drive and dozens of donated pieces, as well as monetary support, were collected to distribute to the community. Some of the donated items were handmade knit accessories which were donated to local residents and students before Christmas. Monetary donations were used to purchase gifts of warmth.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all that supported this important drive.

Is it Time for New Diabetic Shoes?



Do you, or someone you know, wear diabetic shoes? Has it been a year since the current pair was received? If so, this may be a good time to order a new pair of diabetic shoes through the Federal Diabetic Shoe Program. On an annual basis, Medicare will cover the cost of one pair of diabetic shoes and inserts for diabetic patients that qualify.

Why Special Shoes?

It is important for persons with diabetes to have shoes with good air circulation and minimal to no inside stitching to help prevent rubbing or irritation of the skin. By ensuring proper fit and good air circulation, properly designed diabetic shoes prevent pressure ulcers, encourage good blood circulation, and allow the skin to breathe.

Shoes are designed in styles for work, exercise, leisure and social activities. Even diabetic patients without Medicare are strongly encouraged to make an appointment at NorthPointe Foot & Ankle to receive a comprehensive, ten point foot exam, and discover the shoe that is right for them.

In addition to shoes, the practice offers many items designed specifically for diabetic patients - socks, slippers, lotions, wound care ointment, etc.



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