



TOE AND METATARSAL FRACTURES



Lee Hoffman, DPM
Brian Kissel, DPM
Charles Kissel, DPM
Michael Schey, DPM
David Ungar, DPM
Marc Weitzman, DPM

MEET OUR TEAM Kawana Berry

We are pleased to introduce the newest member of the NorthPointe Foot & Ankle Team, Kawana Berry.

Kawana comes to us with several years of experience as a medical assistant.

As a medical assistant at NorthPointe, she performs a variety of clinical and clerical actions to expedite patient flow and activities of the office. She will meet you in the exam room to make sure you are comfortable and gather basic information to update your medical records and give the doctor an overview of your concerns.



Once your exam is complete, she will follow the directions that the doctor has given to complete your care.

When not in the office, Kawana spends time with her four children and helps with her husband's plumbing business. She also enjoys dance and skating.

The structure of the foot is complex, consisting of bones, muscles, tendons, and other soft tissues. Of the 26 bones in the foot, 19 are toe bones and metatarsal bones. Fractures of the toe and metatarsal bones are common and require evaluation by a specialist. Your NorthPointe Foot and Ankle podiatrist should be seen for proper diagnosis and treatment, even if initial treatment has been received in an emergency room.

A fracture is a break in the bone. Fractures can be divided into two categories: traumatic fractures and stress fractures.



Traumatic fractures are caused by a direct blow or impact, such as seriously stubbing your toe. Traumatic fractures can be *displaced* or *non-displaced*. If the fracture is displaced, the bone is broken in such a way that it has changed in position. Signs and symptoms of a traumatic fracture include:

- You may hear a sound at the time of the break.
- Pain at the place of impact at the time the fracture occurs and perhaps for a few hours later, but often the pain goes away after several hours.
- Crooked or abnormal appearance of the toe.
- Bruising and swelling the next day.

Stress fractures are tiny, hairline breaks that are usually caused by repetitive stress. Stress fractures often afflict athletes who, for example, too rapidly increase their running mileage. They can also be caused by an abnormal foot structure, deformities, or osteoporosis. Improper footwear may also lead to stress fractures.

Stress fractures should not be ignored. They require proper medical attention to heal correctly. Symptoms of stress fractures include:

- Pain with or after normal activity
- Pain that goes away when resting and then returns when standing or during activity
- Pain at the site of the fracture when touched
- Swelling, but no bruising

If a fractured toe or metatarsal bone is not treated correctly, serious complications may develop. For example:

- A deformity in the bony architecture which may limit the ability to move the foot or cause difficulty in fitting shoes
- Arthritis, which may be caused by a fracture in a joint, or may be a result of angular deformities that develop when a displaced fracture is severe or hasn't been properly corrected
- Chronic pain and deformity
- Non-union, or failure to heal, can lead to subsequent surgery or chronic pain.

Treatment

Fractures of the toe bones are almost always traumatic fractures. Treatment for traumatic fractures depends on the break itself and may include these options:

- **Rest.** Sometimes rest is all that is needed to treat a traumatic fracture of the toe.
- **Splinting.** The toe may be fitted with a splint to keep it in a fixed position.
- **Rigid or stiff-soled shoe.** Wearing a stiff-soled shoe protects the toe and helps keep it properly positioned.
- **"Buddy taping"** the fractured toe to another toe is sometimes appropriate.
- **Surgery.** If the break is badly displaced or if the joint is affected, surgery may be necessary.

Breaks in the metatarsal bones may be either stress or traumatic fractures. Treatment of metatarsal fractures may include:

- **Rest.** Sometimes rest is the only treatment needed
- **Avoid the offending activity.** It is important to avoid the activity that led to the fracture. Crutches or a wheelchair are sometimes required.
- **Immobilization, casting, or rigid shoe.** A stiff-soled shoe or other form of immobilization may be used to protect the fractured bone while it is healing.
- **Surgery.** Some traumatic fractures of the metatarsal bones require surgery, especially if the break is badly displaced.

Summer Foot Protection

During the warmer weather our feet tend to be frequently exposed to the elements as we wear sandals, flip flops and are often barefoot. Many foot injuries or problems occur due to non-supportive footwear and barefoot walking. In addition, pool areas and public showers are home to infections such as planter warts and athlete's foot, while the sun's powerful rays can cause painful sun burns.

The podiatrists of the NorthPointe Foot & Ankle have some advice to share that can help prevent harmful conditions to the feet.

Going Barefoot

- Limit walking barefoot as it exposes feet to sunburn, as well as planter warts, athlete's foot, ringworm, and other infections and also increases risk of injury to your feet.
- Wear shoes or flip-flops around the pool, to the beach, in the locker room and even on the carpeting or in the bathroom of your hotel room to prevent injuries and limit the likelihood of contracting any bacterial infections.
- Remember to apply sunscreen all over your feet, especially the tops and fronts of ankles, and don't forget to reapply after you've been in the water.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. This will not only help with overall health, but will also minimize any foot swelling caused by the heat.
- Some activities at the beach, lake or river may require different types of footwear to be worn so be sure to ask the contact at each activity if specific shoes are needed. To be safe, always pack an extra pair of sneakers or protective water shoes. If your shoes will be getting wet, they should be dried out completely before your next wearing to prevent bacteria or fungus from growing.



Flip Flops

Flip flops are not good for extensive walking. They do not offer any arch support, heel cushioning, or shock absorption. Wearers may suffer foot pain due to lack of arch support, tendinitis, and even sprained ankles if they trip. Wearers are also at greater risk of stubbed toes, glass cuts, puncture wounds, or having a heavy object injure their foot.

- Do not wear flip flops when playing sports or running.
- Do not wear flip flops while gardening or doing yard work.
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen on all areas of your foot while wearing open shoes.

Be Prepared

In case of minor foot problems, be prepared with the following on-the-go foot gear:

- Flip flops – for the pool, spa, hotel room, and airport security check points.
- Sterile bandages – for covering minor cuts and scrapes.
- Antibiotic cream – to treat any skin injury.
- Emollient-enriched cream – to hydrate feet.
- Blister pads or moleskin – to protect against blisters.
- Motrin or Advil (anti-inflammatory) – to ease tired, swollen feet.
- Sunscreen – to protect against the scorching sun.
- Aloe Vera or Silvadene cream – to relieve sunburns.

Injuries

If you injure your foot or ankle while on vacation or during an outing, seek professional medical attention from a podiatric physician. Many often only contact a family doctor when something is broken or sprained, but a podiatrist is an expert in treating your foot and ankle injuries and begin caring for your ailment immediately.

Receive our monthly newsletter. Send your email address to:
Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com

Pedicure Advice

Not all pedicure facilities offer clean and proper foot care and infections and other foot ailments may arise. NorthPointe Foot & ankle shares the following advice for individuals deciding on a location to receive a pedicure:

- Make sure that the instruments used are clean and sterilized. Ask the technician which cleaning procedure they use, as well as the frequency of cleaning.
- You may consider bringing your own tools – nail nipper, cuticle nipper, cuticle pusher and curette cleaner
- Make sure foot tubs or basins are drained after performing a pedicure to get rid of all the bacteria present. Once all the water is removed, the inside of the tub should be wiped down with an antibacterial cleaner.
- Make sure the technician's hands are clean. The nail technician should wash their hands in between clients. If they do not wash their hands, request that they do, or that they wear gloves.
- **If you are diabetic, pedicures are not advised.** Visit your podiatrist before receiving a pedicure to identify any potential risks.
- Do not allow aggressive cleaning. Nails should be cut straight with slightly rounded edges. If bleeding of calluses occurs, see your podiatrist.
- Discolored or sickly nails should be treated by your podiatrist.
- Since polish hides the nails from the sun and can foster fungus, you may wish to limit the use of polish to special occasions. However, keep-



ing your feet clean, nails trimmed and skin moisturized for summer sandal wearing is recommended.



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