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NorthPointe News



Foot & Ankle Special
of the Michigan



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MEET Pamela Edwards

Pamela Edwards is a medical assistant and is the newest member of the NorthPointe Foot & Ankle team.

Pam received her training from the National Institute of Technology in Southfield. She has been a practicing medical assistant since 2002 with experience in internal medicine, family practice and podiatry.

As a medical assistant, she performs a variety of clinical and clerical actions to expedite patient flow and activities of the office. Once examined by the doctor, Pam will follow any direction he/she may give to complete your care.



Pam is very family oriented. She enjoys spending time with her husband, three children and the family dog.

BALL OF FOOT PAIN

Metatarsalgia is a condition of the feet that affects the ball of the foot; impacting both bone and joint. The metatarsals are the lengthy bones that go from the toes to the mid-foot. While the name may sound strange, this foot condition is very common. Most people experience pain near the heads of these bones. Some may notice discomfort around the big toe while others endure pain that impacts that area by toes two, three, and four.

Common symptoms include pain and burning in the ball of the foot, worsening discomfort when pressure is placed on the area, pain or tingling in the toes, and sometimes loss of feeling. You may notice that the pain becomes worse if you flex your feet.

Causes

Improper shoe gear is the primary cause of painful inflammation in this area. For instance, high-heeled shoes force pressure on the forefoot. This is compounded if there isn't enough toe space due to the style or size.

Purchase shoes that fit well, provide plenty of wiggle room in the toe box, and have a heel that is less than two inches. If you're holding onto your old favorites, it's time to let them go. Walking barefoot, or in thin-soled house shoes on hard floors, can be especially irritating to the bones and nerves in the ball of the foot.

Aging affects the entire body, and the feet are no exception. While many people complain of gaining weight as they get older, fat in the feet actually diminishes. This is problematic since the extra cushioning provided by this padding protects against some conditions such as metatarsalgia.

Some physical activities put excess stress on the metatarsal regions of the feet. Running is just one example of a common exercise that can exacerbate this painful condition. If you participate in high-impact workouts, monitor your feet closely.

The structure and condition of an individual's

feet plays a role in this condition as well. A bunion, or other common deformities, can change the way that weight is distributed across the feet. If your arches are high, gait and weight distribution is also affected.

Treatment

Once a diagnosis is made, your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist will explain the best treatment options for your case. His/her recommendation will be based on the cause of your pain, so imaging tools may be used to ensure that there is not a fracture present.



Invasive measures are not usually necessary. Instead, conservative treatments such as rest, changes in footwear, icing, anti-inflammatory medications, custom orthotics, and padding may be recommended. It is important to seek treatment at the onset of pain in order to get the most benefit from these methods. Orthotics can redirect pressure from the ball of the foot, which will aid in recovery.

If you are active, taking a break from your normal routine may be suggested. This doesn't mean that exercise must be eliminated. Instead, switch to a low-impact activity, such as swimming, while you are recovering.

Pedicure Advice



With the warmer temperatures outside, open-toed shoes are making their way out of the closet and slipped on underneath beautifully manicured feet. The pedicure season is in full swing!

Unfortunately, not all pedicure facilities offer clean and proper foot care and infections and other foot ailments may arise. NorthPointe Foot & Ankle physicians share

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.
 - * Soaking in alcohol is NOT an approved sterilization method.
 - * Sterilization – rather than disinfecting – is the best method. This can be done by using a cleaning agent such as hospital bactericide, fungicide or viricide. Instruments can be sterilized in an autoclave or ultrasonic machine.
 - * Make sure the instruments are sterilized after each use.
 - * 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.
- Find a manicurist that you like and stay with them. Most technicians will enable you to order a set of instruments that will be your very own, you can take them home to clean them and insure that they will not be used on others that may have organisms that could be passed to you.
- **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, keeping your feet clean, nails trimmed and skin moisturized for summer sandal wearing is recommended.

What About Flip Flops?

Flip flops just 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.



footwear to be worn. 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

Summer Foot Gear

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.

Going Barefoot

During the warmer weather our feet tend to be frequently exposed to the elements as we wear sandals, flip flops and are often barefoot.

Below is some advice regarding barefoot walking:

- Limit walking barefoot as it exposes feet to sunburn, as well as plantar 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.
- If you have poor circulation, keep blood flowing with periodic ankle flexes, toe wiggles, and calf stretches.
- Some activities at the beach, lake or river may require different types of

footwear to be worn. 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.

- If you injure your foot or ankle while on vacation or during an outing, get immediate professional medical attention. When the foot or ankle is broken or sprained, seek specialty treatment from a podiatrist or foot specialist.