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# NorthPointe News



## Foot & Ankle Special



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## MEET OUR TEAM Danell Roszczewski

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle is pleased to welcome Dannie Roszczewski back to the team. Dannie is returning to NorthPointe as a full-time medical assistant. She has worked part-time for the office in the past.

For more than seven years, Dannie has been employed in the podiatric field. She enjoys the experiences and challenges that being a podiatric medical assistant provides. Always eager to learn, she welcomes new processes and programs and looks forward to making our patients comfortable and prepped to meet with the doctor. Dannie will also make sure the patient is set to complete their care per their doctor's instructions.



In her spare time, she loves spending time with her two energetic teen sons and other family members.

## BUNIONS

Even though bunions are a common foot deformity, there are misconceptions about them. Many people may unnecessarily suffer the pain of bunions for years before seeking treatment.

A bunion is often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. The big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment – producing the bunion's "bump."

Bunions are a progressive disorder. They begin with a leaning of the big toe, gradually changing the angle of the bones over the years and slowly producing the characteristic bump, which becomes increasingly prominent.

Bunions are most often caused by an inherited faulty mechanical structure of the foot. It is not the bunion itself that is inherited, but certain foot types that make a person prone to developing a bunion.

Although wearing shoes that crowd the toes won't actually cause bunions, it sometimes makes the deformity get progressively worse.

Symptoms, which occur at the site of the bunion, may include:

- Pain or soreness
- Inflammation and redness
- A burning sensation
- Possible numbness



Symptoms occur most often when wearing shoes that crowd the toes, such as shoes with a tight toe box or high heels. In addition, spending long periods of time on your feet can aggravate the symptoms of bunions.

Because bunions are progressive, they don't go away, and will usually get worse over time. Not all cases are alike – some bunions progress more rapidly than others. Your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle doctor will evaluate your bunion and a treatment plan will be developed that is suited to your needs.

### Treatment

Sometimes observation of the bunion is all that's needed. To reduce the chance of damage to the joint, periodic evaluation and x-rays are advised.

In many other cases, however, some type of treatment is needed. Early treatments are aimed at easing the pain of bunions, but they won't reverse the deformity itself. These include:

- **Changes in shoe wear.** Wearing the right kind of shoes is very important. Choose shoes that have a wide toe box and forego those with pointed toes or high heels which may aggravate the condition.
- **Padding.** Pads placed over the area of the bunion can help minimize pain. These can be obtained from your surgeon or purchased at a drug store.
- **Activity modifications.** Avoid activity that causes bunion pain, including standing for long periods of time.
- **Medications.** Oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Icing.** Applying an ice pack several times a day helps reduce inflammation and pain.
- **Injection therapy.** Although rarely used in bunion treatment, injections of corticosteroids may be useful in treating the inflamed bursa sometimes seen with bunions.
- **Orthotic devices.** In some cases, custom orthotic devices may be provided by the foot and ankle surgeon.

If non-surgical treatments fail to relieve bunion pain and when the pain of a bunion interferes with daily activities, it's time to discuss surgical options with your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle surgeon. Together you can decide if surgery is best for you.

A variety of surgical procedures are available to treat bunions. The procedures are designed to remove the "bump" of bone, correct the changes in the bony structure of the foot, and correct soft tissue changes that may also have occurred.

## Stay Balanced

Many people experience increasing difficulty with balance and safe mobility as they age, which leads to the common and serious problem of falls. These problems are associated with loss of confidence and decreasing ability to function independently. In many cases it leads to the consideration of institutional care. Injuries from falls are a major cause of hospitalizations and deaths in the aging population. Fortunately, most causes of falls and instability can be treated successfully and the risk of falling reduced.

### How common are falls and balance problems in older persons?

Each year, falls occur in over a third of persons over age 65, and in over half of persons over age 75. About a third of the older population reports some difficulty with balance or ambulation. This percentage increases in frequency and severity after age 75.

### What are the major causes of falls?

The most common causes of falls include environmental hazards (such as slippery floors and loose rugs), weak muscles, unstable balance, dizziness, vision problems and side effects from medications (such as dizziness and confusion).

### How can I tell if I am at risk for falling?

The most important predictors of fall risk include: muscle weakness (difficulty rising from a sitting position without use of hands to push off); unsteady balance (needing to walk slowly or with a wide base of support to maintain balance); having fallen in the past year; and taking certain medications (some blood pressure medications as well as psychoactive medications, such as sedatives or anti-depressants).

### What can I do to decrease my chances of falling?

Ask your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle physician to evaluate your strength, balance, gait, entire medication list and overall risk factors for falls. The chances are good that there will be a number of things that can be done to reduce fall risk, such as adjusting medications, obtaining physical therapy, starting an exercise regimen, or receiving an assistive device such as a cane or walker, to make walking safer.

### How can I make my home environment safer?

There are many pamphlets available to assist in hazard-proofing your home environment. Alternatively, a home health provider, such as a visiting nurse or occupational therapist, can come to your home and provide a hands-on inspection and set of recommendations. Common recommendations include installing bathroom grab bars, improving lighting in key areas, removing hazardous conditions on the floor, and making stairways and entrance areas safer.

### What kind of walking aids are available and whom should I talk to about getting the right product?

A whole spectrum of walking aids are widely available, ranging from foot or ankle stabilizers to simple canes or more elaborate types of walkers and wheelchairs. Any walking aid should be carefully measured to the right size and provide the optimal level of stability without creating too much dependency. Your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle physician can help you with proper fit and advice.

## Footwear and Fall Prevention

Choosing the right kind of footwear is an important factor in reducing your risk for falls. Here are a few recommendations to keep you safe and help avoid falling:

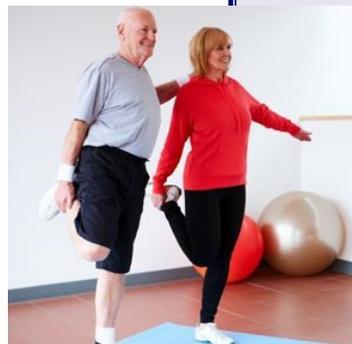
- Avoid shoes that are excessively flexible and worn.



- Proper fit is critical. Shoes that are too big can be a hazard, but so can shoes that are too small. Ill-fitting shoes can cause calluses, corns, and sores.

- Avoid excessively slick-soled shoes, as well as those that are too "grippy." A rubber sole is recommended because it also absorbs shock.

- Wearing shoes with low heels and a large or wide contact area may reduce the risk of a fall in everyday settings and activities. Anything with a very high or narrow heel creates more imbalance.



To receive our monthly newsletter,  
send your email address to:  
[NorthPointe@FootandAnkleSEMI.com](mailto:NorthPointe@FootandAnkleSEMI.com)

## American Diabetes Association. **American Diabetes Association Alert Day** **ALERT! DAY** March 26, 2019

American Diabetes Association Alert Day® is a one-day "wake-up call" asking the American public to take the Diabetes Risk Test to find out if they are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Individuals should take the Diabetes Risk Test and encourage family and friends to do the same. The test is free and only takes a few minutes. Visit [www.Diabetes.org](http://www.Diabetes.org) to answer the questions on line, or create a printout of the test. NorthPointe Foot & Ankle encourages anyone with risk factors to schedule a Comprehensive Foot Exam to find out if treatment is needed.

