

**NorthPointe Foot & Ankle**  
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## Product Feature

### MOORE BALANCE BRACE

This is the first brace that was created specifically with fall prevention in mind.

Do you have any of the following?

- Difficulty Walking
- Fall Risk
- Vestibular Disorder
- Chronic Ankle Instability
- Arthritic Ankle
- Stroke Imbalance
- Foot Drop
- Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy

If so, the Moore Balance Brace may be able to help you! This first of its kind brace is covered by most insurances, including Medicare and Medicaid.

Please visit your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle doctor to find out if the Moore Balance Brace is right for you.



For this and other foot care products visit our online store at [www.MichiganFootCare.com](http://www.MichiganFootCare.com) or stop by our office.

# NorthPointe News

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2012

## 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 death in the older 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.

### What can be done to improve balance?

Similarly, there are a number of exercises and assistive devices that can improve stability. Ask your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle physician what would be best for you.

### 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 simple canes to 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. When used properly, these aids can dramatically improve mobility and safety.



If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter, send your email address to:

**Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com**



# The Role of Footwear in Fall Prevention

Choosing the right kind of footwear for fall prevention is an important factor in reducing your risk for falls. Here are some recommendations to keep you safe and free from falling:



- Avoid shoes that are excessively flexible and worn.
- Wear shoes that encourage activity. Walking shoes and leisure shoes that are lightweight are often the best, as long as the midsole is not too flexible.
- Avoid open-backed shoes or open-backed house slippers.
- If your foot swells during the day, stretchable Lycra shoes are best, as long as they remain supportive and are not too flexible.
- 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.
- Depth shoes are good for balance because they often support the foot higher toward the ankle.
- Shoes that are lower to the ground are always the best. Anything with a very high or thick sole creates more imbalance. Avoid any shoe with a sole over half an inch.

- Shoes with good padding are more comfortable and are recommended, but too much padding will be like walking on sand and can push the foot up too high in the shoe.
- Avoid excessively slick-soled shoes, as well as those that are too "grippy." A crepe sole is recommended because it also absorbs shock.

- Velcro laces are ideal, but Velcro latching is often neglected, thus creating a situation where the shoe can become too loose. Shoes with laces are fine, as long as they are tied snugly to create a good fit.
- In numerous studies, those who went barefoot or wore slippers in the house were found to be at the highest risk for falling.
- Wearing shoes with low heels and a large or wide contact area may reduce the risk of a fall in everyday settings and activities.
- Diabetics and seniors should avoid open-toed shoes, sandals, and flip-flops.
- If bending over to put on your shoes makes you dizzy or off-balance, use a long-handled shoe horn.

## Welcome Dr. Ungar



NorthPointe Foot & Ankle is growing to better serve you. David Ungar, DPM has joined the NPFA physician team.

"Dr. Ungar has been successfully treating foot and ankle conditions for over 25 years," said Lee Hoffman, DPM. "We are very happy that he is joining our practice in Berkley. He has a

wonderful rapport with patients and he will allow the practice to offer additional appointment times to individuals for quick, professional attention to their concerns."

Dr. Ungar is a board certified podiatrist with extensive experience in treating a wide array of foot and ankle problems including diabetic care and conditions of the elderly. He is a member of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA), American Podiatric Medical Association, The American Board of Orthopedics and Primary Podiatric Medicine and others. Dr. Ungar is accepting new patients.

[www.MichiganFootCare.com](http://www.MichiganFootCare.com)



## Diabetes Alert Day!



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. Held on the fourth Tuesday of every March, the next Alert Day will be held on March 27, 2012. It is also the perfect time to make an appointment for a Comprehensive Foot Exam by your NorthPointe physician.

The Diabetes Risk Test asks users to answer simple questions about weight, age, family history and other potential risk factors for pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes. You can be part of the movement to Stop Diabetes and get your free Diabetes Risk Test (English or Spanish) by visiting: [stopdiabetes.com](http://stopdiabetes.com) or by calling 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).

For more information or advice on dealing with diabetes, or to schedule a Comprehensive Foot Exam, please contact us at 248-545-0100.