

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle
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Meet Our Team!

Allison Swanson

You may have seen this smiling face around the office.

Allison Swanson has been a member of our team for four months. Although she is primarily working behind the scenes, the work she does is important to the function of our office.

In addition to compiling and helping to pull patient charts, Allison is responsible for preparing and mailing patient/ doctor referral letters and other monthly mailings. Wherever she is needed, she is always willing to help.



Married on May 11th, the recent bride will be leaving our office in a few months to join her husband, a Marine, where he is stationed in California.

Allison is an avid reader and enjoys writing, drawing and spending time with her cat, Beau.

NorthPointe News

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BIG TOE COMPLICATIONS

Each day, with every step you take, your big toe bears a tremendous amount of stress—a force equal to about twice your body weight. Most of us don't realize how much we use our big toes. We tend to take it for granted, unless a problem develops, such as hallux rigidus.

Hallux rigidus is a disorder of the joint located at the base of the big toe. It causes pain and stiffness in the joint, and with time, it gets increasingly harder to bend the toe. Hallux rigidus is actually a form of degenerative arthritis.

Many patients confuse hallux rigidus with a bunion, which affects the same joint, but they are very different conditions requiring different treatment. Hallux rigidus is a progressive condition. The toe's range of motion gradually decreases as time goes on until it potentially reaches the point of being stiff, or what is sometimes called a "frozen joint."

Common causes of hallux rigidus are faulty function (biomechanics) and structural abnormalities of the foot that can lead to osteoarthritis in the big toe joint. People who have defects, such as fallen arches or excessive pronation of the ankles, are susceptible to developing hallux rigidus. Other causes may be hereditary, injury or overuse.

Symptoms: Early signs and symptoms include:

- Pain and stiffness in the big toe during use (walking, standing, bending, etc.)
- Pain and stiffness aggravated by cold, damp weather
- Difficulty with certain activities
- Swelling and inflammation around the joint

Additional symptoms may develop, including:

- Pain, even during rest
- Difficulty wearing shoes because bone spurs (overgrowths) develop
- Dull pain in the hip, knee, or lower back due to changes in the way you walk
- Limping (in severe cases)

Treatment: The sooner this condition is diagnosed, the easier it is to treat. Therefore, the best time to see your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle surgeon is when you first notice symptoms. If you wait until bone spurs develop, your condition is likely to be more difficult to manage.



Non-Surgical Treatment

In many cases, early treatment may prevent, or postpone, the need for surgery in the future. Treatment for mild or moderate

cases of hallux rigidus may include:

Shoe modifications. Shoes with a large toe box put less pressure on your toe. Stiff or rocker-bottom soles may also be recommended.

Orthotic devices. Custom orthotic devices may improve foot function.

Medications. Oral nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen, may be recommended to reduce pain and inflammation.

Injection therapy. Injections of corticosteroids may reduce inflammation and pain.

Physical therapy. Ultrasound therapy or other physical therapy modalities may be undertaken to provide temporary relief.

Surgical Treatment : In some cases, surgery is the only way to eliminate or reduce pain. There are several types of surgery for treatment of hallux rigidus. In selecting the procedure, or combination of procedures for your particular case, your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle surgeon will take into consideration the extent of your deformity based on the x-ray findings, your age, your activity level, and other factors.



Fungal Toe Nails

Fungal infection of the nail is an infection underneath the surface of the nail caused by fungi. When the tiny organisms take hold, the nail often becomes darker in color and foul smelling. Debris may collect beneath the nail plate, white marks frequently appear on the nail plate, and the infection is capable of spreading to other toenails, the skin, or even the fingernails. If ignored, the infection can spread and possibly impair one's ability to work or even walk. This happens because the resulting thicker nails are difficult to trim and make walking painful when wearing shoes.

Because it is difficult to avoid contact with microscopic organisms like fungi, the toenails are especially vulnerable around damp areas where people are likely to be walking barefoot, such as swimming pools, locker rooms, and showers, for example. Injury to the nail bed may make it more susceptible to all types of infection, including fungal infection. Those who suffer from chronic diseases, such as diabetes, circulatory problems, or immune-deficiency conditions, are especially prone to fungal nails. Other contributing factors may be a history of athlete's foot and excessive perspiration.

Topical or oral antifungal medications may be prescribed to treat fungal nails. Permanent nail removal is another possible form of treatment for persistent fungal nails.



Infection Prevention Tips:

- Proper hygiene and regular inspection of the feet and toes are the first lines of defense against fungal nails.
- Clean and dry feet resist disease.
- Washing the feet with soap and water and remembering to dry thoroughly, is the best way to prevent an infection.
- Shower shoes should be worn when possible in public areas.
- Shoes, socks, or hosiery should be changed more than once daily.
- Toenails should be clipped straight across so that the nail does not extend beyond the tip of the toe.
- Wear shoes that fit well and are made of materials that breathe.
- Avoid wearing excessively tight hosiery, which promote moisture.
- Socks made of synthetic fiber tend to "wick" away moisture faster than cotton or wool socks.
- Disinfect instruments used to cut nails.
- Disinfect home pedicure tools.
- Don't apply polish to nails suspected of infection—those that are red, discolored, or swollen, for example.

Wearing Flip Flops

Flip flop season is finally here! Let your toes breathe....but are you keeping them protected? The doctors of Northpointe Foot & Ankle would like to share some thoughts on this popular form of footwear.

Flip flops just are not the right shoe for all occasions. They are meant to be worn while walking on flat surfaces and they also provide good protection from athlete's foot and plantar warts around a public pool or shower.

However, unlike sturdy shoes, flip flops aren't 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.

Tips for wearing flip flops:

- Do not wear them when playing sports or running
- Do not wear them while gardening or doing yard work
- If you are diabetic, wearing flip flops puts you at greater risk for foot injuries
- Wear sturdy, supportive shoes while walking for long periods of time
- Don't forget to apply sunscreen on all areas of your foot while wearing open shoes
- Use extra care while driving. Flips flops can impair a driver's control if they come off the foot and lodge under the brake or gas pedal.



NorthPointe Foot & Ankle Sponsors Berkley's SummerFest!

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle is pleased to once again sponsor Berkley's SummerFest.

Hosted by Berkley's Parks & Recreation Department, the summer festival encourages everyone to get outdoors and participate in a series of terrific events! All events are listed at

www.BerkleyMich.org

- Lil' Tykes Tot Lot Night, 6/25, 5 pm
- Community Garage Sale: 6/27 & 28
- Senior Activity Day: 7/9, 9:30 am
- Community Picnic: 7/19, 11 am
- Jaycee Park Jamboree: 7/31, 6 pm
- Family Movie Night: 8/23
- Ice Cream Social: 8/26

If you would like to receive our monthly newsletter, send your email address to: Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com



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