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# NorthPointe News



## FOOT HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



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### MEET OUR TEAM Elizabeth Cantwell

Elizabeth Cantwell is a graduate of Ross Medical Education Center. She has been a member of the NorthPointe Foot & Ankle team since 2014 and is a great support to our physicians as a Medical Assistant.



In her role, Elizabeth greets you in the exam room and requests some basic information. This information is used to keep your medical records up-to-date and gives the doctor an overview of your concerns.

Once you have been treated by the doctor, Elizabeth follows any directions that he may give to complete your care.

When not at the office, Elizabeth is busy at home taking care of her daughters, Madison and Olivia.

Special attention is given to foot health each April as national Foot Health Awareness month is observed. The podiatrists at NorthPointe Foot & Ankle would like to remind you that this is the perfect time to determine what shape your feet are in.

Problems in our feet can cause problems throughout our body. Examining our feet can also help identify symptoms of other serious diseases such as vascular disease and diabetes.

Our feet need to last a lifetime and most Americans log an amazing 75,000 miles on their feet by the time they reach age 50. Aging and repetitive use lead to normal changes in your feet and keeping up with those changes is important to ones' overall health and well-being. Your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle physicians are doctors of podiatric medicine and are uniquely qualified among medical professionals to treat the foot and ankle based on their education, training and experience. Our podiatrists are here to identify changes, normal and irregular, and support their findings with suggested action or treatment.

#### Normal changes to the foot include:

- The foot becomes wider and longer
- There is mild settling of the arch which is seen as flattening of the foot
- The fat pad on the bottom of the heel thins out, causing loss of natural padding and spring in the step
- The foot and ankle lose some of their normal range of motion and become stiffer
- There can be some loss of balance while walking

As these changes occur, shoe sizes and support needs change and must be addressed.

Some foot changes can occur that are abnormal or pathological. These problems do not

occur naturally and many can be prevented, or their progress halted, by modifying ill-fitting shoes, adding supportive orthotics, or surgery.

#### Abnormal changes to the foot include:

- Bunions (the formation of a large bump on the outer side of the big toe, which starts to point the toe towards the smaller toes)
- Hammering of the toes (curling of the toes)
- Clawing of the toes (more severe curling of the toes)
- Bunionettes (the formation of a large bump on the side of the smallest toe, which starts to point the small toe toward the large toe)
- Calluses or corns, which occur on the toes or foot due to high pressure over bony areas
- Morton's neuromas ("pinched nerve" between the toes)
- Arthritis of the joints

Yearly examinations with your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist are important. Your podiatrist will track changes, check for proper sensation and circulation and call attention to abnormalities. Problems and changes can then be addressed. Early detection and treatment of problems help keep you on your feet and active.



### YEARLY FOOT EXAM 20 Minutes to Stay Active

Take time to schedule an annual foot exam today. NorthPointe Foot & Ankle offers convenient appointments times.

Call 248-545-0100 or request online at [www.MichiganFootCare.com](http://www.MichiganFootCare.com).

Receive our monthly newsletter. Send your email address to:  
[Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com](mailto:Doctors@NorthPointeFoot.com)

# 10 Foot Care Tips

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrists would like to share with you 10 easy steps for you to follow to help maintain healthy feet.

- **Inspect your feet regularly** - It is important to observe your feet on a daily basis: every morning when you wake up, and every night when you are about to sleep. Any changes in the general appearance of the foot, like the color and the texture, should not be ignored. Unusual swelling and changes in the toenails should not be neglected either.
- **Practice strict foot hygiene** - The feet are favorite breeding grounds for bacteria and fungi. Athlete's foot is a common fungal infection that occurs because of poor foot hygiene. Make sure you wash your feet well and dry them thoroughly afterwards.
- **Moisturize the skin on your feet** - Warm days can make the feet lose all their natural oils, making them extremely dry. Thus, it is important to hydrate the skin on your feet to replenish all the lost moisture, otherwise fissures can develop. You can apply lotions and creams that are specially formulated for foot use.
- **Wear appropriate footwear** - Always purchase the right size of footwear. Shoes that are too tight tend to bruise or tear the skin surrounding the pressure points of the feet, such as the ankle and the smallest toe. Comfort should never be substituted for style. Furthermore, buy different shoes that are appropriate for every season.
- **Trim your toenails straight across** - Always cut your nails straight across, and never too defined at the sides. This practice will lead to an ingrown toenail, and neglecting this can cause an infection. Because the feet make good grounds for bacterial and fungal growth, the infection may spread to surrounding structures.
- **Swap shoes often** - It is important to avoid wearing the same shoes every day. Your feet have a lot of sweat glands, and wearing shoes will only absorb the moisture released from these glands. Make it a point to dry your shoes after each and every use.
- **Exercise regularly** - Exercising is good for your feet. However, make sure you wear the appropriate shoe for the activity. Simple exercises can be done at home, such as walking on a treadmill. Foot exercises improve good pedal circulation, preventing many disorders of the heart and blood vessels.
- **Do not walk barefoot** - Even when at home, always wear the appropriate footwear. There are a lot of harmful microorganisms found on the floor, road, or on any surface for that matter. Although such microbes are invisible to the naked eye, they can easily enter the bloodstream through the feet—especially if there are any open wounds that make great entry points.
- **Apply sunblock during hot days** - Even your feet need occasional pampering, especially during warm and humid days. Applying sunblock with a considerable amount of SPF will help prevent painful sunburns and blisters.
- **See a podiatrist regularly** - It is always best to consult a specialist for professional medical help. A podiatrist is a doctor that treats disorders of the foot. If you notice or feel anything unusual in your feet, do not hesitate to see your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle doctor immediately.



## Laser Treatment

Did you know that NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrists are certified in laser surgery?

### What is a laser?



A laser is a device which generates an intense, finely focused beam of light, known as a beam. This laser

turns the water in the cells to steam, called vaporization. There is no burning.

### What foot problems are best treated by laser surgery?

The laser beam of light is used in place of the scalpel to remove warts, ingrown nails, infected toenails, and some deep-rooted callouses, among other foot problems. Also, laser treatment allows faster healing for diabetic wounds.

### What are the benefits of laser surgery?

Laser surgery takes advantage of the properties of lasers to remove tissue without many of the undesirable side effects that sometimes result from using a scalpel. The laser light vaporizes the affected tissues almost instantaneously and so precisely that normal surrounding tissue is not affected. The unique property of the laser is that as it vaporizes and destroys affected tissue, it also sterilizes and stops bleeding in the surrounding areas. Other advantages include: faster recovery, time with better healing for the patient; decreased chance of infection; and there is usually no scar formation after laser surgery.

With the laser, it is frequently possible to complete treatment in one visit, while with other techniques, many visits or even hospitalization may be required.

## Prepare Your Feet for Sandals

Do you have discolored toenails? If so, this is the time to visit your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist to find out if there is a treatment that can help you **before the summer sandal wearing season** begins.