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Nearby Walking Trails Keep Feet Moving

Walking and biking are heart-healthy activities that encourage family communication and offer opportunities for outdoor learning. The Oakland County Parks system offers more than 70 miles of paved and natural trails for walking, jogging, skating and biking.

Dogs are welcome on trails but must be on a six-foot leash at all times, unless inside the dog parks at Lyon Oaks, Orion Oaks or Red Oaks.

The Oak Routes network of trails, pathways, and blueways traverses much of the 910 square miles of the county. This non-motorized system serves a diverse range of users, providing safe and well-maintained linkages to important natural, cultural and civic destinations and other points of interest within and outside of the county.

Think Spring! Get your feet moving on an interesting Oakland County Trail!

www.oakgov.com/



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FOOT HEALTH AWARENESS

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

Our feet are the foundation of our body and too often foot and ankle concerns are overlooked or ignored. An annual foot exam can lead to a better quality of life and also may help detect the onset of other life threatening diseases.

Your NorthPointe podiatrist's examination of your feet can help identify early symptoms of serious disorders such as vascular disease and diabetes. Foot issues can also cause other problems throughout our body.

Normal changes to the foot as we age 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 physical changes occur, shoe sizes and support needs also change and must be addressed.

Some foot changes can occur that are abnormal or pathological. These problems do not happen naturally and many can be prevented, or their progress halted, by addressing them early. Your NorthPointe doctor can provide a wide range of treatments, from conservative care of the skin and nails to surgical options for advanced wounds or complications involving the bones of your feet. See your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle

podiatrist if you experience:

- **Sprains or fractures:** Pain, swelling, bruising, and difficulty walking on the affected foot or ankle are the most common symptoms.
- **Pain that doesn't go away:** Pain, stiffness, tingling, or other discomfort that doesn't resolve quickly is your body's way of communicating. Get these symptoms checked in a timely manner.
- **Skin irritation or discoloration:** Rashes, cracked skin, and other changes to the skin of the feet can leave you vulnerable to infection and should be checked by your podiatrist.
- **Abnormal growths, lumps, or bumps on your feet and ankles:** Warts, corns, calluses, and other bumps can be indications of infection, abnormalities in your gait, or more serious conditions.
- **Changes to your nails:** Discoloration, thickening, pain, or drainage can be signs your toenails require a podiatrist's attention. They can also be signs of more serious health issues.

Some of the most common conditions podiatrists treat are:

- **Complications from diabetes.** Your NorthPointe doctor plays a key role in helping manage diabetes successfully and avoid foot-related complications such as ulcers or infection.
- **Hammertoes.** A bending at the first joint of the toe. Surgical techniques will realign the bones of the toe.
- **Bunions.** A lump on the side of the big toe formed when the bone or tissue at the joint moves out of place.
- **Overuse injuries.** Inflammation in the ball of the foot can become severe.

A yearly exam with your podiatrist is vital to tracking changes, checking for proper sensation and circulation, and calling attention to abnormalities. Early detection and treatment of problems help keep individuals on their feet and active.



Nail Problems

Nail problems affect people of all ages. Common causes of toenail problems include trauma, ill-fitting shoes, poor circulation, poor nerve supply and infection. Problems with toenails can be successfully treated by your NorthPointe podiatrist.

Some nail problems include:

Nail Fungus

A fungus is an organism that lives in warm moist areas. Fungus of the toenails is a common problem that can affect people of all ages, although it most commonly affects individuals who are older.

Toenail fungus often begins as an infection in the skin called tinea pedis (also known as athlete's foot). The fungus often starts under the nail fold at the end of the nail. Over time it grows underneath the nail and causes changes to its appearance, such as a yellow or brownish discoloration. It can also cause thickening and deformity of the toenail.

Many people have difficulty with their toenails and need assistance in caring for them. A podiatrist can diagnose the cause of toenail problems and recommend treatments. The doctors at NorthPointe Foot & Ankle often recommend using the treatment Formula3 Antifungal. This topical anti-fungal treats fungus of the toenails. The product is distributed by Tetra Corp. and results are guaranteed!

Thick Toenails

Toenails will often become thick as an individual grows older. Thickening may also occur as a result of trauma to the toenail, such as when it repeatedly hits the end of a shoe that is too short. Sometimes when something is dropped on the toenail, the nail will fall off. When a new toenail grows back it will often be thicker than it was previously.

Thick toenails can also be seen in individuals with nail fungus (onychomycosis), psoriasis, and hypothyroidism. Those who have problems with the thickness of their toenails should consult their podiatrist for proper diagnosis and treatment.

Yellow Toenails

The most common cause of yellow discoloration in the toenails is a fungal infection. The fungus often develops underneath the nail, resulting in it becoming thick, raised, and yellow in color.

Other potential causes for yellow discoloration of the nail include diabetes mellitus and lymphedema (chronic leg swelling). Yellow staining of the nails can also occur in individuals who use nail polish. A stained nail may take several months to grow out.



10 Easy Ways to Keep Your Feet Healthy

1. **Inspect your feet daily** – Look for any changes in the general appearance of the foot
2. **Practice good foot hygiene** - Wash your feet well, and dry them thoroughly afterwards.
3. **Moisturize your feet** - It is important to hydrate the skin in your feet to replenish all the lost moisture.
4. **Wear appropriate footwear** – Make sure to purchase the right size of footwear and buy appropriate shoes for your activities.
5. **Trim your toenails** – Don't create deep curves at the edges and trim to just above the skin
6. **Change shoes often** - Your feet have a lot of sweat glands, and shoes will absorb the moisture released from these glands.
7. **Exercise regularly**
Exercising is good for your feet.
8. **Do not walk barefoot** - Even when at home, always wear the appropriate footwear.
9. **Apply sunscreen** - Applying sunscreen with a considerable amount of SPF will help prevent painful sunburns.
10. **See your NorthPointe podiatrist yearly-** If you notice or feel anything unusual in your feet, do not hesitate to see your podiatrist immediately.



Get Ready to Walk. Now that Spring has sprung— treat yourself to a daily walk. A little stretching and the use of proper shoes will you keep you walking comfortably! NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrists can help you determine the proper shoe and proper warm-up techniques for you. Bring your walking shoes with you to your next exam. Generally speaking, your feet fall into one of three categories:

Neutral-arched feet. Your feet aren't overly arched nor are they overly flat. Look for shoes with firm midsoles, straight to semi curved lasts — last refers to the shape of the sole and the footprint around which the shoe is built — and moderate rear-foot stability.

Low-arched or flat feet. Low arches or flat feet may contribute to muscle stress and joint problems in some individuals. If you have significantly flat feet, look for a walking shoe with a straight last and motion control to help stabilize your feet.

High-arched feet. High arches may contribute to excessive strain on joints and muscles, as your feet may not absorb shock as well. Look for cushioning to compensate for your lack of natural shock absorption. A curved last also may help.