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NorthPointe News



Foot & Ankle Special



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Shockwave Therapy

Shockwave therapy is used to treat conditions such as degenerated tendons (Achilles tendonitis), heel pain (plantar fasciitis) and tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis).



Shockwave therapy is a noninvasive method that uses pressure waves to treat various musculoskeletal conditions and may help avoid surgery. High-energy acoustic waves (shockwaves) deliver a mechanical force to the body's tissues.

This therapy is an outpatient procedure. A probe is placed on the skin after a gel is applied to help conduct the shockwaves. High-or low-energy waves may be used. High-energy waves may cause some pain or discomfort and may require a local or regional anesthetic. Treatment is most often a one time procedure. Low-energy shockwave therapy often is performed without anesthesia. Three to five treatments are often required.

Meet with your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist to discuss if shockwave therapy is right for you.

ATHLETE'S FOOT

Also known as tinea pedis, athlete's foot is a fungal infection of the skin. The fungus grows within the outer layers of skin in dark, warm, and moist places, such as shoes. The infection tends to develop in the moist areas between toes. This contagious condition usually causes itching, stinging, or burning sensations.

Causes

A class of mold-like fungi called dermatophytes causes athlete's foot. While these microorganisms normally inhabit your skin, they generally do not cause problems. When the skin is continuously kept moist, this fungi is allowed to grow freely. Damp socks and shoes are prime locations for this organism to grow. Footwear that is poorly ventilated, like plastic shoes, tend to harbor this condition more often.

As athlete's foot is contagious, walking barefoot on surfaces such as public showers, pools, saunas and locker rooms increases the likelihood of contracting the condition. Borrowing shoes and towels from another person with athlete's foot has also been known to transmit the fungus from one host to the next. People with a weakened immune system and those with diabetes are at an increased risk for infection.

Symptoms

Athlete's foot can be similar in appearance to many other foot conditions. For instance, tight shoes can cause the feet to sweat; the accumulated moisture and friction can then cause peeling of the skin. Due to the subtlety of differences in foot conditions, contact your NorthPointe Foot & Ankle podiatrist to diagnose your case accurately and efficiently.

The most common symptom of athlete's foot is the scaling and peeling of skin between toes. This first phase of symptoms is usually present without pain, itching, or odor. If the infection has spread to the soles of the feet, then redness, blistering, and scaling can occur. If a secondary bacterial infection develops, the fungus can cause a breakdown in skin tissue. The skin between the toes will become soggy and whitened. This progression of symptoms leads to itching and odor. If this breakdown

continues, the skin between the toes can crack and begin to ooze.

Occasionally, athlete's foot will also cause infection of the toenails that is rather difficult to eradicate. Another problem associated with athlete's foot is an allergic reaction. It is possible for particles to access the bloodstream and move throughout the body. The associated allergic reaction usually takes the form of blisters on the toes.

Treatment

This condition is generally treated with topical antifungal medications applied to the dry, scaly areas of the feet. With more severe cases, an oral medication may be required. To relieve damp skin between the toes, the feet can be soaked in a solution of aluminum sub-acetate twice daily for 20 minute increments. If your foot condition continues to get worse over time despite treatment, schedule an appointment with your podiatrist to discuss appropriate options.



Prevention

Preventing athlete's foot is a fairly simple process. Remembering to dry the feet after showers, baths, and time in the pool is a necessity. Never go barefoot in communal showers or pool areas. These warm, moist areas largely increase a person's risk. Change your socks and shoes when they become damp. Alternating pairs of shoes is another good way to reduce the risk of infection and is also good practice for running enthusiasts. Never share shoes or towels-- athlete's foot is contagious and can be transferred by these objects.

To receive our monthly newsletter,
send your email address to:
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Keep Feet Warm and Cozy All Winter

When dealing with the deep snow and sub-zero temperatures of the winter months, it's important to take care of your feet all winter long. You'll want them to be healthy and ready for action when spring finally arrives.

NorthPointe Foot & Ankle, along with the American Podiatric Medical Association (AMPA), offer some advice for keeping feet healthy in common winter scenarios:



- Winter is skiing and snowboarding season. Never ski or snowboard in footwear other than ski boots specifically designed for that purpose. Make sure your boots fit properly; you should be able to wiggle your toes, but the boots should immobilize the heel, instep, and ball of your foot. You can use orthotics (support devices that go inside shoes) to help control the foot's movement inside ski boots or ice skates.

- Committed runners don't need to let the cold stop them. A variety of warm, lightweight, moisture-wicking active wear available at most running or sporting goods stores helps ensure runners stay warm and dry in bitter temperatures. However, some runners may compensate for icy conditions by altering how their foot strikes the ground. Instead of changing your foot strike pattern, shorten your stride to help maintain stability. And remember, it's more important than ever to stretch before you begin your run. Cold weather can make you less flexible in winter than you are in summer, so it's important to warm muscles up before running.
- Boots are must-have footwear in winter climates, especially when dealing with winter precipitation. Between the waterproof material of the boots themselves and the warm socks you wear to keep toes warm, you may find your feet sweat a lot. Damp, sweaty feet can chill more easily and are more prone to bacterial infections. To keep feet clean and dry, consider using foot powder inside socks and incorporating extra foot baths into your foot care regimen this winter.
- Be size smart. It may be tempting to buy pricey specialty footwear (like winter boots or ski boots) for kids in a slightly larger size, thinking they'll be able to get two seasons of wear out of them. But unlike coats that kids can grow into, footwear needs to fit properly right away. Properly fitted skates and boots can help prevent blisters, chafing, and ankle or foot injuries. Likewise, if socks are too small, they can force toes to bunch together, and that friction can cause painful blisters or corns.
- Finally, don't try to tip-toe through winter snow, ice, and temperatures in summer-appropriate footwear like sneakers, sandals, or flip-flops. Exposing feet to extreme temperatures means risking frostbite and injury. Choose winter footwear that will keep your feet warm, dry, and well-supported.



Prevent Snow Clearing Injuries

Snow removal is more than just another necessary household chore. All that bending and heavy lifting can put you at serious risk for injury. Snow removal can be especially dangerous if you do not exercise regularly. Below are some general tips for proper snow clearing.



- **Check with your doctor.** Because this activity places high stress on the heart, you should always speak with your doctor before shoveling or snow blowing. If you have a medical condition or do not exercise regularly, consider hiring someone to remove the snow.
- **Dress appropriately.** Light, layered, water-repellent clothing provides both ventilation and insulation. It is also important to wear the appropriate head coverings, as well as mittens or gloves and thick, warm socks. Avoid falls by wearing boots that have slip-resistant soles.
- **Start early.** Try to clear snow early and often. Begin shoveling/snow blowing when a light covering of snow is on the ground to avoid dealing with packed, heavy snow.
- **Clear vision.** Be sure you can see what you are shoveling/snow blowing. Do not let a hat or scarf block your vision. Watch for ice patches and uneven surfaces.

Berkley Parks & Recreation WINTERFEST

PARKS & RECREATION



NorthPointe Foot & Ankle is proud to sponsor this year's WinterFest. WinterFest is a FREE annual event designed to embrace the cold weather and celebrate Michigan's winter season. It is a great event for whole family - with plenty of activities including an outdoor petting zoo, arts & crafts, cookie decorating, unicorn rides, a soup cook-off, ice sculptures and more!

For more information, contact Berkley Parks & Recreation: 248-658-3470
Saturday, February 2, 12:00—3:00 pm

