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# NorthPointe News

## Foot & Ankle Special



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### Is it Time for New Diabetic Shoes?

Do you, or someone you know, wear diabetic shoes? Has it been a year since the current pair was received? If so, this may be a good time to order a new pair of diabetic shoes through the Federal Diabetic Shoe Program. On an annual basis, Medicare will cover the cost of one pair of diabetic shoes and inserts for diabetic patients that qualify.

It is important for persons with diabetes to have shoes with good air circulation and minimal to no inside stitching to help prevent rubbing or irritation of the skin. By ensuring proper fit and good air circulation, properly designed diabetic shoes prevent pressure ulcers, encourage good blood circulation, and allow the skin to breathe.

Shoes are designed in styles for work, exercise, leisure and social activities. Even diabetic patients without Medicare are strongly encouraged to make an appointment at NorthPointe Foot & Ankle to receive a comprehensive, ten point foot exam, and discover the shoe that is right for them.



## COLD WEATHER FOOT CONCERNS

Each season affects our feet in different ways. Keeping your feet healthy during the winter months may include the following:

- **Cracked Heels/Dry Skin** is the most common cold weather foot complaint. Also called "heel fissures," the cracks look unsightly and can be painful when you're on your feet. The simplest way to prevent heel cracks and other areas of dry skin on your feet is to apply moisturizing cream, especially after a shower. But that may not be enough. Shoes or boots with solid heel counters can help prevent heel cracks, as can padded socks that cushion the heel from impact that may increase pressure in the heel area. Your NorthPointe doctor can help you choose the best form of treatment for your cracked heels.
- **Only wear proper fitting footwear** appropriate for the activity. 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. Make sure your ski or snowboard boots fit properly; you should be able to wiggle your toes, but

the boots should immobilize the heel, instep, and ball of your foot.

- **Boots are must-have footwear in winter.** 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 provide warmth, ski sock liners worn under regular socks are a way to keep feet warmer without adding bulk. Choose 100% polyester, or wool fiber socks. They will keep feet warmer and drier than 100% cotton.
- **Biomechanical problems** of the foot, such as over-pronation, can increase the risk of injury to skiers and snowboarders. Ask your Northpointe doctor if orthoses can be used to correct the biomechanics of your foot in your ski boot. This could minimize your risk of injury.



### A HEALTHIER 2020

Treat yourself to a healthier 2020 by concentrating on three important actions:

1. Make a fitness resolution that makes it easy to fit 30 minutes a day of physical activity into your busy life. You could resolve to go for a 30-minute walk after dinner every night, or to take two 15-minute walking breaks every day at work. If you do decide to join a gym, make a plan for when you'll go and what you'll do when you're there.
2. Think about your eating habits and how you can tweak them for weight management. Are you a nighttime snacker? Resolve to have a cup of tea or take a warm bath when you get the munchies. Do you tend to eat a lot of high-fat, high-sugar, energy-dense foods? Resolve to swap out some of these foods for foods with low energy density like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans.
3. Feel like old friends or family have fallen by the wayside? It's good for your health to reconnect with them. Research suggests people with strong social ties live longer than those who don't.

## Self-Test for Foot Problems

The Foot Health Foundation of America offers this simple quiz to pinpoint any warning signs of foot and ankle problems.

- How much time do you spend on your feet each day?  
a. Less than 2 hours **0**   b. 2 to 4 hours **1**   c. 5 to 7 hours **2**   d. 8 hours or more **3**
- How old are you?  
a. Under 40 **0**   b. Between 40 and 59 **1**   c. 60 and over **2**
- How would you describe your weight?  
a. At ideal weight or less than 20 pounds overweight **0**  
b. 20 to 39 pounds overweight **2**  
c. 40 or more pounds overweight **3**
- Have problems with your feet or ankles ever prevented you from participating in:  
a. Leisure/sports activities?      Yes **2**      No **0**  
b. Work activities?                      Yes **3**      No **0**
- Have you ever received medical treatment for problems with your feet and/or ankles?  
a. Yes **3**      b. No **0**
- Do you regularly wear heels two inches or higher?  
a. Yes **2**      b. No **0**
- What types of exercise do you engage in or plan to engage in? (check all that apply)  
a. Walking **1**   b. Field sports **2**   c. Winter sports **2**   d. Court sports **3**  
e. Aerobics **3**   f. Running **3**   g. None **0**
- Do you have the appropriate shoes for your sport or sports?  
a. Yes **0**      b. No **3**
- Do you experience foot or ankle pain when walking or exercising?  
a. Rarely **1**   b. Sometimes **2**   c. Often **3**   d. Never **0**
- Do you:  
a. Do you exercise in footwear that is more than one year old or in hand-me-down footwear?      Yes **3**      No **0**  
b. Stretch properly before and after exercising?      Yes **0**      No **3**
- Do you:  
a. Have diabetes?      Yes **3**      No **0**  
b. Experience numbness and/or burning in your feet?      Yes **3**      No **0**  
c. Have a family history of diabetes?      Yes **2**      No **0**
- Do you: (check all that apply)  
a. Sprain your ankles frequently (once a year or more) or are your ankles weak?      Yes **2**      No **0**  
b. Have flat feet or excessively high arches?      Yes **2**      No **0**  
c. Experience pain in the Achilles tendon or heel or have shin splints (pain in the front lower leg)?      Yes **2**      No **0**  
d. Have corns, calluses, bunions or hammertoes?      Yes **3**      No **0**  
e. Have arthritis or joint pain in your feet?      Yes **3**      No **0**  
f. Have poor circulation or cramping in your legs?      Yes **3**      No **0**

Now total your score by adding the bolded blue number to the right of each answer. Find out what your score means by reviewing the parameters at the right

## What Does Your Score Mean?

**0 - 20 points:** Congratulations! Your feet and ankles are very healthy and you can maintain your active lifestyle and/or exercise

regimen. With proper attention and care your feet and ankles should remain healthy; however, you may want to schedule an annual exam with our office to

ensure their long-term health. Furthermore, if you scored points for questions 4, 5, 9, 11 or 12, you should contact our office in the near future for a check-up.

**21 - 40 points:** Pay attention. Your feet and ankles are showing signs of wear, placing you in the moderate risk category. Although you can continue your normal activities, you should contact our office for a check-up. If you participate in a rigorous exercise regimen on a regular basis or plan to - or if you scored points for questions 4, 5, 9, 11 or 12 - you should contact our office soon to safeguard your foot and ankle health.

**41 points or higher:** Caution. Your feet and ankles are at high risk for long-term medical problems and you should contact our office as soon as possible. If you exercise, you should pay particular attention to your feet and ankles until you are seen by your NorthPointe doctor. If you have not begun exercising, it is advisable to contact our office before undertaking any type of exercise.



*The doctors and staff of NorthPointe Foot & Ankle wish you and your family a healthy and happy New Year!*

# 2020!!

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[NorthPointe@FootandAnkleSEMI.com](mailto:NorthPointe@FootandAnkleSEMI.com)