
Florida Podiatric Medical Association



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Tips for Protecting Feet from the Heat

TALLAHASSEE – Now that the dreariness of the long, cold winter has abated, it's time to get out and have some fun! However, many people are not aware that warm weather can usher in a range of foot problems. Podiatric physicians see a host of foot problems during the warmer months, some brought on by exposure to the elements and others by poor choice of footwear.

“Patients with foot pain come to my office and when I note they are wearing flip flops, they proceed to tell me that they know those aren't appropriate shoes,” states Dr. Maria Noll, President of the Florida Podiatric Medical Association. “They may be cute, fun, easy, and considered a fashion statement, but they are not the proper shoe choice for people with foot pain.”

Here are some tips to remember during the warm spring and summer months:

1. Limit walking barefoot, as it exposes feet to sunburn as well as plantar warts, athlete's foot, ring worm, and other infections. Walking without shoes can also increase the likelihood of foot injury.
2. Wear shoes or flip flops around the pool, to the beach, in a locker room, and even on the carpeting or in the bathroom of your hotel room to prevent injuries and limit the possibility of contracting bacterial infections.
3. As you apply sunscreen, remember your feet, especially the tops and fronts of ankles, and don't forget to reapply after you've been in the water.
4. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. This will not only help with overall health, but will also minimize any foot swelling caused by the heat.
5. Keep blood flowing with periodic exercises, such as ankle flexes, toe wiggles, and calf stretches.
6. Some activities at the beach, lake, or river may require different types of shoes, so be sure to wear protective footwear, such as sneakers and water shoes, rather than flip flops. Also, if your shoes get wet, they should be dried out completely before your next wear to prevent bacteria or fungus from growing.
7. If you have sweaty feet, you are more prone to fungal infections. Change your shoes daily, so they can dry thoroughly between uses. Make sure to change your socks if they are wet.
8. If you injure your foot or ankle while on vacation, seek professional medical attention from a podiatric physician, who is specifically trained and qualified to treat your feet. To find a podiatric physician, visit the FPMA website at fpma.com and click on the “Find a Podiatric Physician in Your Area” link, which is available on the home page.

Diabetic patients must be more attentive to their feet and should not walk barefoot. Diabetes can damage the nerves and blood vessels in feet, which can reduce feeling in the feet. As a result, you may injure your feet without even realizing it. Even a small laceration or puncture to the skin can lead to a serious infection. Diabetic patients need to wash and inspect their feet daily so they can identify problems and seek treatment.

Have fun this spring and summer, but remember to take care of your feet.

For more information, contact the FPMA at (850) 224-4085.

The FPMA is a Tallahassee-based, statewide, professional association representing podiatric physicians in Florida. Founded in 1927 for the purpose of advancing the science and art of Podiatric Medicine, the FPMA is dedicated to promoting the importance of podiatric healthcare among the general public and healthcare professionals throughout the state of Florida. The FPMA currently has over 900 members and represents 70% of the active, licensed podiatric physicians in Florida.

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