

Foot Facts

Don't Let Your Feet Ruin Your Day At The Beach

(NAPSA)—For many Americans, warm weather calls for a trip to the beach. An estimated 38 percent of summer travelers plan to go to a beach or lake this year.

But if you're not careful, bare feet can run into trouble along those sandy shores, according to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons' (ACFAS) consumer Web site FootPhysicians.com.

Here are some simple steps you can take to prevent foot problems.

Puncture wounds and cuts.

Wear shoes to protect your feet from puncture wounds and cuts caused by seashells, broken glass and other sharp objects. Don't go in the water if your skin gets cut—bacteria in oceans and lakes can cause a serious infection. A puncture wound should have medical treatment from a foot and ankle surgeon within 24 hours to avoid complications.

Jellyfish stings. A jellyfish washed up on the beach can still sting if you step on it. If tentacles stick to the foot or ankle, remove them. Vinegar, meat tenderizer or baking soda reduce pain and swelling. Most jellyfish stings heal within days, but if they don't, see a doctor.

Sunburns. Feet get sunburnt, too. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to the tops and bottoms of your feet.

Burns. Sand, sidewalks and paved surfaces get hot in the summer sun. Wear shoes to protect the soles of your feet from getting burned, especially if you have diabetes.

Ankle injuries, arch and heel pain. Walking, jogging and



Watch Your Step—Wearing shoes or sandals at the beach can protect feet from injury.

playing sports on soft, uneven surfaces such as sand frequently leads to arch pain, heel pain, ankle sprains and other injuries. Athletic shoes provide the heel cushioning and arch support that flip-flops and sandals lack. If injuries occur, use rest, ice, compression and elevation to ease pain and swelling. Pain lasting more than a few days should be evaluated and treated by a foot and ankle surgeon.

Diabetes risks. Due to poor blood circulation and numbness in the feet, a diabetic may not feel pain from a cut, puncture wound or burn. Any type of skin break on a diabetic foot has the potential to get infected and ulcerate if it isn't noticed right away. Diabetics should always wear shoes at the beach, and remove them regularly to check for foreign objects such as sand and shells that can cause sores, ulcers and infections.

For more information on foot and ankle conditions, or to locate a foot and ankle surgeon, visit the ACFAS Web site FootPhysicians.com.