

Foot Notes

Foot Care In Step With America's Aging Population

(NAPSA)—Medicine and health awareness have taken such a dramatic step forward that the life expectancy of the average American has increased by 30 years since 1900.

To live useful, satisfying lives, the three million people currently aged 65 must be able to move about. Foot ailments can make this difficult, if not impossible.

The human foot has been called the mirror of health. Foot doctors or doctors of podiatric medicine (DPMs) are often the first doctors to see signs of such systemic conditions as diabetes, arthritis and circulatory disease in the foot.

Among these signs are dry skin, brittle nails, burning and tingling sensations, feeling of cold, numbness and discoloration. Always seek professional care when these symptoms appear.

Many people mistakenly believe that it is normal for feet to hurt and endure foot problems that can be treated.

There are more than 300 different foot ailments. Some can be traced to heredity, but most stem from years of neglect or abuse. Even among people in their retirement years, many foot problems can be treated successfully, and the pain relieved.

Normal wear and tear over the years causes changes in the feet. As people age, their feet tend to spread and lose the fatty pads that cushion the bottoms of feet. Additional weight can affect the bone and ligament structure.

Older people, consequently, should have their feet measured for shoe sizes more frequently and not assume they are still the same size. Dry skin and brittle nails are common conditions older people

Here are some foot care tips from the APMA:

- Properly fitted shoes are essential. Shoes that don't fit can cause serious foot problems.
- A shoe with a firm sole and soft upper is best for daily activities.
- Shop for shoes in the afternoon, feet tend to swell during the day.
- Walking is the best exercise for your feet.
- Pantyhose and stockings should be the correct size and free of seams.
- Do not wear constricting garters or tie stockings in knots.
- Never cut corns and calluses with a razor, pocket knife or other such instruments.
- Bathe your feet daily in lukewarm (not hot) water, using a mild soap, preferably one containing moisturizers, or use a moisturizer separately.
- Trim or file your toenails straight across.
- Inspect your feet every day or have someone do this for you. If you notice any redness, swelling, cracks in the skin or sores, consult your physician.
- Have your feet examined by a DPM at least twice a year.



face. Women, young and old, have four times as many foot problems as men and high heels are often the culprit.

For more information on foot health, visit the APMA's Web site at www.apma.org or call 1-800-FOOTCARE to request a free brochure.