

Hints from the Heart



A Healthy Foot Forward for Seniors

Foot problems are especially common in Seniors. Feet lose cushioning as they age and the skin and nails can grow dry and brittle. Many seniors have poor circulation which can slow the healing of foot sores. The best thing you can do for your feet is find comfortable shoes that fit. Do not wear tight or high-heeled shoes in order to avoid rubbing, pinching and undue pressure on your feet. Feet can also become wider later in life, so always have your feet measured before buying new shoes.

Protect your feet by keeping your blood flowing freely. If you usually spend much of the day in a chair, you can improve your circulation by stretching, walking, and other exercises. Avoid wearing tight socks or sitting too long with your legs crossed. You should also avoid smoking because it narrows the arteries and can hamper blood flow.



Typical foot issues Seniors experience that can be prevented or treated are:

ISSUE	PREVENTION
Athlete's Foot - Redness, blisters, peeling, and itching.	Keep your feet clean and dry. Whenever possible, go barefoot or wear open-toe sandals.
Dry skin - Burning and itching of skin.	Moisturizers, preferably the kind with petroleum jelly or lanolin.
Corns and calluses - painful sores.	Pumice stone or callus file. Protect from irritation with nonmedicated pads or moleskin. Never use over-the-counter solutions!
Heel Spurs - Calcium deposits on your heel from too much pressure on your feet.	Give your feet a break with heel pads, heel cups, or other forms of support.
Hammertoes - When a toe doesn't have room to move, the knuckle can swell and draw the toe back	Wear shoes and socks that give your toes ample space.
Ingrown toenails - sharp piece of nail pierces the skin.	Regularly trim the nail straight across, even with the top of the toe.

Check your feet every day. Call your doctor promptly if you find a corn or callus or if you have a cut, scrape, blister, or bruise that doesn't start to heal within one day.

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