

# To keep going, take care of feet

Dear Joe:  
Would you please address the subject of foot care and the elderly in your column? Thank you.

Dear Mrs. S.:  
Caring for the feet is a lifelong process. Feet influence our physical, mental and social well-being. Over the years the feet are subject to physical neglect and traumatic stresses resulting in serious foot problems most of which need not have occurred or at least could have been minimized. Unfortunately, caring for the feet is low in priority at any age.

More than 80 percent of people over age 50 have at least one foot complaint. These range from ingrown toenails to corns, calluses, bunions, edema and other circulatory problems. Feet often reflect systemic disease conditions long before their actual appearance.

Preventing foot problems is really the best route to take. It isn't time consuming, it takes about the same amount of time each day as putting on makeup (for women) and shaving (for men).

Some preventive measures are: Wash the feet daily with mild soap and lukewarm water. Soaking the feet for any longer than five minutes is unnecessary. Dry the feet (particularly in between the toes). Apply moisture cream. Use a thin coating of powder if perspiration is a problem.

Avoid walking barefoot at any time. Walking barefoot during the summer months does not "toughen" the feet, it only exposes them to injury.

Have both feet measured every time you buy shoes. Since the feet enlarge a little as the day progresses (because of edema), it's better to shop for shoes later in the day. Women should avoid shoes with high heels and pointed toes. Socks should fit properly and not be too tight. Shoes and socks made of natural fiber (leather and cotton) are best.

See a foot specialist, a podiatrist, chiropodist or a specially trained professional, for routine foot care if

eyesight is poor or if you have diabetes or circulatory problems.

When cutting the toenails, cut them straight across with a good nail clipper and file away rough areas.

When walking or standing, stand erect with the weight distributed evenly over both feet.

Never trim corns and calluses yourself.

Avoid using hot water bottles or heating pads on your feet. They can cause burns, particularly to those who have decreased sensation in the lower limbs.

Never wear circular garters to hold up hose as they interfere with circulation.

Ongoing foot care is a prime factor in keeping the older person mobile in the later years.

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 1J3.

## gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell



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## Volunteers are needed

The Easter Seal Society of Oakland County, 1105 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, needs volunteers to assist in a Pre-School Awareness program. Volunteers go into preschools or centers and teach tests about disabilities. The volunteer needs to relate well with young children. If you are over the age of 19 and are interested, contact Jane Gillin at 338-9626 regular business hours.

Volunteers are needed for a horseback riding program for handicapped children and adults. If you like working with people and horses, are 15 and older, sign up to lead three

horses or as a sidewalker assisting the rider. Sessions are held every Monday evening beginning April 4 at the Bloomfield Open Hunt Club, E. Long Lake and Kensington Roads in Bloomfield Hills. Contact Oakland County 4-H Youth Program, 858-0889, during business hours.

For information on other opportunities or if your organization needs volunteers, call: The Center for Volunteerism, United Community Services, 226-9429 weekdays, or write 1212 Griswold, Detroit, 48226-1899.

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