

## MEDICAL BRIEFS

### Health-O-Rama

Alterra Claro Bridge of Farmington Hills, an assisted living residence at 27050 Drake Road, will host an open house and "Health-O-Rama 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, June 7. Free blood pressure checks, consultations with a rehabilitation therapist, as well as vascular screenings at a \$36 cost each will be provided.

Vascular screenings include: Carotid artery screen (no turtle-necks), abdominal aorta screen (fast for six hours prior), and a lower extremity screen (no pantyhose). The screenings will be conducted by Advanced Screening. Please call to register for vascular screening by calling 1-800-641-8110.

Door prizes will be awarded. For more information about the event, call (248) 489-9382.

### Movement disorders

The Oakwood Pediatric Neurology & Movement Disorders Program will hold an Open House 6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday, May 31 at the Oakwood Waterworks Building, 21031 Michigan Avenue in Dearborn.

Presenters for special needs children are invited to tour the facility, enjoy refreshments and hear the latest information on state-of-the-art therapy for movement disorders (tics/Tourette's, other), spasticity and cerebral palsy, as presented by Dr. Yasser Awaad, director of the program. Presentation begins 7 p.m.

For more information, call (313) 791-4323.

### Stroke prevention study

Dr. Seemant Chaturvedi, associate professor of neurology at Wayne State University School of Medicine, will participate in a global study to determine whether atorvastatin, a cholesterol-lowering drug, is effective in preventing strokes.

Atorvastatin, known commercially as Lipitor, is commonly used to treat heart disease and prevent second heart attacks. This is the first study to see if the drug is useful in preventing strokes or mini-strokes after a first occurrence. About 20 percent of strokes are caused by blockage of the blood vessels leading to the brain.

The study will recruit 4,200 patients who have LDL cholesterol between 100 and 150 and had either a stroke or a mini-stroke within the past six months. Those who have coronary artery disease are not eligible to participate. Participants, who will be given either 80 mg of atorvastatin or a placebo, will receive all health monitoring, doctor visits and study medication free of charge.

For more information, call Flicia Mada at (313) 746-1893.

### Knee and hip pain

Tired of the pain in your hips and knees limiting your physical activity?

Botsford Hospital will offer a four-week knee-hip FOLDONKRAIS class 4-5 p.m. on Wednesdays at TRACC, 39850 Grand River Avenue (1/8th mile west of Haggerty Rd) from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The class is designed to improve posture, flexibility and coordination and reduce chronic pain. The cost is \$40. Preregistration required. Call (248) 473-5000.

**We want your health news**

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer noteworthy information including Medical Database (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsletters (appointments/new lines in the medical field) and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, etc.). We also welcome noteworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories. To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

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38221 Schoolcraft Road  
Livonia, MI 48150

**FAX US:**  
(734) 963-7272

**E-MAIL US:**  
rskoglund@oc.homecomm.net

# Putting Your Best Foot Forward

## Say goodbye to corns, callouses and crooked toes ...



By RENEE SKOGLUND  
STAFF WRITER

rskoglund@oc.homecomm.net

Ready to pull those socks and shoes off for a romp at the beach and in the park? For many, however, warm weather means exposing neglected feet and toenails for the whole world to see.

While pedicures and foot massages make your feet look and feel better, they should not be done to mask foot health problems, according to Johanna Youner, D.P.M., director of the Podiatric Clinic of New York University Downtown Hospital.

"Proper foot care involves more than a fresh coat of polish or even a pedicure. Pay attention to the health of your feet year-round and realize that unsightly feet may be a sign of a more serious health problem."

Dr. Youner offers these tips for avoiding common foot problems:

- Wear flip-flops in showers and locker rooms.
- Wash feet daily and dry thoroughly.
- Change socks daily, or more often if necessary.
- Treat shoes regularly with antifungal powders.
- Alternate the shoes you wear, and make sure they fit correctly.
- Make sure sterilized, professional tools are used for pedicures.

Dr. Youner recommends caution when having pedicures. "Everything should be sanitized and sterilized. Cutting cuticles can lead to infection, allowing fungus to get into the nail." She also warns that frequent nail polish application and removal can damage nails.

Wearing high heels or ill-fitting shoes can also lead to poor foot health, causing heel fissures, corns and calluses, not to mention nail fungal infection, and other serious complications.

"Approximately one-half of the population has nail fungus," said Dr. W. Steven Watson of Canton Foot Specialists in Canton. Medications used to treat nail fungus include Penlac, a topical medication used in Europe for the past eight years. It's applied once a day and has no side effects, said Watson.

Lamisil (terbinafine HCl tablets) Tablets is an oral treatment taken once daily for toenail or fingernail fungus (onychomycosis). The drug kills dermatophytes, the most common organism associated with nail infections. Results are evident in 90 days, with optimum results in one year, said Watson.

However, Lamisil is not for people with liver or kidney problems. Although serious side effects are rare, your doctor most likely will do blood tests before prescribing the drug.

"We always check liver enzymes before we prescribe," said Watson. "We also get medical clearance from the patient's family doctor if they have any other serious medical problems."

### The sturdy foot

The foot is an anatomical work of art—26 bones, 33 joints, and a network of more than 100 tendons, muscles and ligaments that work together like a finely tuned race car to get us where we want to go.

According to the American Podiatric Medical Association, the average person takes 6,000 to 10,000 steps a day, the equivalent of several miles. Multiply that by a lifetime and most of us have walked about 115,000 miles, more than four times the circumference of the globe.

Oh, my aching feet. Oh, my tender toes.

Although some foot ailments are hereditary, many result from a lifetime of abuse and neglect. High heels—defined as any heel higher than two inches—often pinch the fifth, or little, toe, resulting in a not-too-pretty hammer toe with a corn. Ouch!

The new higher platform shoes also can do damage to your feet and back as much as high heels. In a recent issue of Botsford General Hospital's Health News, Dr. Marshall Solomon, chairman of Botsford's Podiatric Medicine Department, wrote:

"Walking in these shoes changes a person's relation to the ground. It causes them to reorient themselves and forces them to mis-step. Many times this leads to fractures and breaks."

However, many foot problems—such as flat feet, which cause the leg to rotate inward, resulting in knee, hip and lower back pain, or uneven limb length—can be corrected with an orthotic, a special insert for the shoe.

### Advanced Hammer Digit Repair Procedure

Hammer toe  
Since this condition is inherited, your children may have hammer toes.

Before

A surgical shoe is no longer necessary three to six weeks after surgery.

Enlarged bone has been removed

After

The absorbable stitch dissolves

## For a great pair of feet, follow these tips

- Do not ignore foot pain. It's not normal. If pain persists, see a podiatric physician.
- Inspect your feet regularly. Pay attention to changes in color and temperature. Look for thick or discolored nails (a sign of developing fungus), and check for cracks or cuts in the skin. Peeling or scaling on the soles of feet could indicate athlete's foot, the most common organism associated with nail infections. Results are evident in 90 days, with optimum results in one year, said Watson.
- Wash your feet regularly, especially between the toes. Dry them completely.
- Trim toenails straight across, but not too short. Be careful not to cut nails in corners or on the sides; it can lead to ingrown toenails. Use nail clippers; scissors can cut the skin. Persons with diabetes, poor circulation or heart problems should not attempt their own feet because they are more prone to infection.

- Purchase new shoes later in the day when feet tend to be at their largest.
- Make sure the shoes fit well—front, back and sides—to distribute weight. The widest part of your foot should correspond to the widest part of the shoe.
- Select and wear the right shoe for the activity (running shoes for running).
- Alternate shoes. Don't wear the same pair every day.
- Avoid walking barefooted. At the beach or when wearing sandals, always use sunblock on your feet as on the rest of your body.
- Be cautious when using home remedies for foot ailments.
- Use a pumice stone for rough, dry skin, but don't be too aggressive. Lotions such as "Pretty

- Hands & Feet" and "Eucarin" can help remove very dry skin," said Dr. W. Steven Watson. If the problem is very severe, see a podiatrist.
  - Soaking your feet often washes away oils. Watson recommends soaking only for therapeutic reasons, such as arthritis or infection. After soaking, rub your feet with aloe vera with vitamin E or cocoa butter.
  - Do not soak your feet if you are diabetic.
  - Do not go barefoot if you are diabetic. Diabetes causes decreased sensation in the feet.
  - If you have diabetes, it is vital that you see a podiatric physician at least once a year for a check-up.
- Sources: The American Podiatric Medical Association and Dr. W. Steven Watson of Canton Foot Specialists.



### Sweaty Feet

The average pair of feet sweat almost a cup of fluid daily. The feet contain lots of sweat glands, which secrete to fluid when you walk or run. These glands also are activated when your feet get hot. Stress or anxiety also triggers perspiration in the soles, which occurs simultaneously with the sweating of the palms.

Do you have (ugh!) sweaty feet? Let the accumulated sweat evaporate.

Wear "breathable" socks and shoes of natural material, which "wick" away moisture from the skin. For socks, cotton (warm

weather) and wool (cool weather) are superior to nylon, orlon, or other synthetics. Select shoes with an upper made of leather or canvas. Avoid man-made materials like vinyl.

Change your shoes and socks as often as possible during the day and do not wear the same pair of shoes on two consecutive days. Adding cornstarch to your shoes and socks (more absorbent than talc and less expensive) is helpful.

Antiperspirants also help prevent sweaty feet. Use conventional spray-on or roll-on products, or ask your pharmacist for a bottle of 25 percent aluminum chloride tincture, the active ingredient in most antiperspirants.

Source: www.foothealth.com

### Stinky Feet

This condition is technically known as bromhidrosis and is caused by an accumulation of bacteria, fungus, mold and yeast. Foot odor is compounded by the rotting of materials within your shoes, which is caused by the caustic action of your perspiration.

Bromhidrosis can be caused by the ingestion of aromatic foods and spices. For some people, their foot odor clears up when they stop eating garlic.

Prevention is directed at keeping the feet both clean and dry. In his book *Zimmer's Skin Care Book*, Jonathan Zimmer recommends a good antiodorant soap, such as Safeguard or Palmolive

Gold. However, he cautions that those soaps may cause photosensitization of the skin and predispose you to a bad sunburn.

Washing your feet with a small amount of Betadine (povidone iodine) scrub is the most effective method of killing surface bacteria. PhisoHex is also effective but requires a doctor's prescription.

Over-the-counter insoles are generally of little value in controlling bromhidrosis. If your problem persists, see your podiatrist or dermatologist.

Source: www.foothealth.com

