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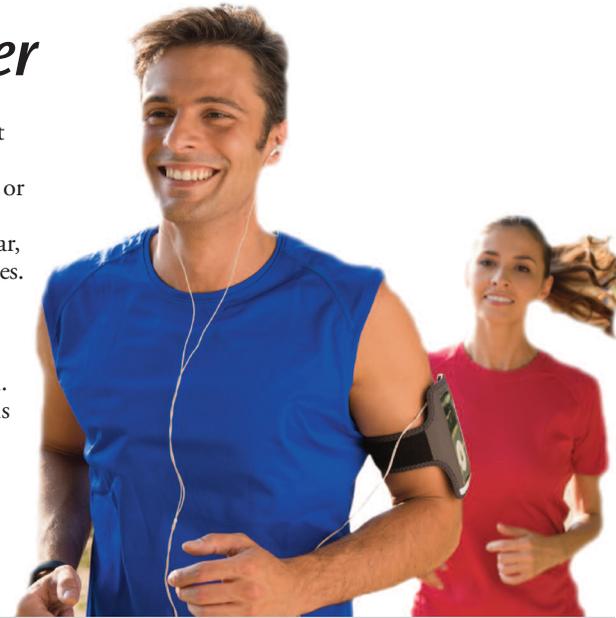
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Avoid Sprains & Fractures This Summer

With warm weather in full swing, most of us have been enjoying the outdoors, whether that means tending to our yards and gardens, playing recreational sports or spending time at the beach. However, it takes just one wrong step for summer fun to turn into a painful ankle sprain or fracture. Walking, running and playing on uneven surfaces, such as grassy lawns, beaches and hiking trails, leave us susceptible to ankle trauma. Lightweight, unsupportive summer footwear, such as sandals or flip-flops, make it even more difficult for us to regain balance on uneven surfaces.

Sprains are one of the most common ankle injuries, but how can we tell if ankle pain is a sprain or a fracture? An ankle sprain is an injury to one or more of the ligaments in the ankle. These ligaments are like rubber bands that stabilize the ankle and limit its side-to-side motion. When these ligaments are stretched or torn, which can happen, for example, when the ankle is suddenly twisted, a sprain results. A fracture can also occur when the foot is rolled under and the ankle is twisted. In this case, one or more bones may break or the ligament may pull a piece of bone off when it tears.

When you have an ankle sprain, rehabilitation is crucial, and it starts the moment your treatment begins. Treatment of ankle fractures depends on the type and severity of the injury. If you suffer from an ankle injury, follow the R.I.C.E. (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) protocol and contact our office for a proper evaluation or seek care at your local Emergency Department after hours. In some cases, surgery may be necessary to repair the fracture and other soft tissue-related injuries, if present.



If you or a family member suffers a sprained or fractured ankle this summer, follow these steps:

- 1. Stay off of it.** Walking with a sprain or fracture can cause further damage.
- 2. Ice it.** Make an icepack by wrapping a bag of frozen vegetables in a lightweight towel. Do not apply the icepack for more than 20 minutes each hour.
- 3. Wrap it.** A loosely applied elastic bandage can help stabilize the ankle and can reduce swelling.
- 4. Elevate it.** Lie with the leg on a pillow so that the ankle is above heart level. This will help with pain and swelling.
- 5. Call our office.** Prompt diagnosis and treatment are important to a successful recovery.



10 Tips for Healthy Outdoor Feet

Enjoying the outdoors in warm weather is much more fun when your feet are not hurting. Follow these ten tips for keeping your feet pain-free:

1. Don't walk barefoot. Your feet can suffer cuts that can easily become infected.
2. Clean and disinfect spider and ant bites to avoid infection.
3. Wear socks. Bare feet inside of shoes are prime targets for athlete's foot and other fungal infections, as well as blisters and calluses. Keep feet dry by changing socks during the day when necessary.
4. Don't pop blisters. They are a natural barrier to infection.
5. Ignore fashion. When buying sandals, make sure they provide arch support and cushion the heel.
6. Wear larger shoes to accommodate swelling feet, especially if you work outside.
7. Wear sunscreen. Your feet need sun protection, too!
8. If it hurts, don't use it. Don't ignore injuries to the foot and ankle. If pain persists, come to our office for an evaluation.
9. Warm up and stretch before exercising and be sure to cool down and stretch afterward. Those few additional minutes can help prevent injuries to your Achilles tendon and plantar fascia.
10. Stay well-hydrated to avoid leg cramps and muscle spasms.

Don't Let Bunions Sideline You



A bunion (from the Latin word *bunio*, meaning enlargement) is often described as a bump on the side of the big toe. But a bunion is more than that. The visible bump actually reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot. The big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment, producing the bunion's "bump."

A bunion is usually a symptom of inherited faulty foot mechanics, such as flat feet or low arches, which put abnormal stress on the front of the foot. Bunions may also be associated with various forms of arthritis. When the joint's protective covering of cartilage deteriorates, the joint can become damaged and be left with a decreased range of motion.

Pain from a bunion can be mild, moderate or severe, making it difficult to walk in normal shoes or high heels. The skin and deeper tissues around the bunion may also be swollen or inflamed.

If you have developed a bunion, conservative treatment can include using bunion pads, wearing comfortable shoes, sandals or athletic shoes and avoiding high-heeled shoes. These home remedies can help reduce pressure on the bunion and smaller toes and diminish the progression of joint deformities.

If bunion pain and deformity have progressed beyond conservative treatment, surgery may be necessary. The specific procedure used depends on the deformity's severity, as well as your age, general health and activity level.

Sometimes observation of the bunion is all that is needed, but to determine the best bunion treatment option for you, call our office to schedule a full exam. We can help ease your bunion pain!

