

“Experts in Their Field” Special Promotional Series

Women’s Foot Health

Whether it is genetic predisposition (congenital) or shoe-altered (acquired), bunions and hammertoes are a common complaint from my female patients. It is important to understand that women tend to have a more flexible foot-type than males and this can lead to bunions and contracted toes from the pressure that certain shoes place upon your feet. It is also important to note that there are conservative options available and not every case needs surgery.

Another common problem with my female patients is development of a neuroma. A neuroma is a benign nerve tumor that usually develops between the third and fourth toes. It is common in runners and in patients who are on her feet significant hours. Typically symptoms will involve a numbness associated with the third and fourth toe or tingling in that particular area. My patients have also stated that it feels like walking on a wrinkled sock and that the discomfort is relieved by massage. Treatment usually involves an injection series to shrink the enlarged nerve. Surgically, the nerve can be decompressed without removing the nerve and results have been very successful with this procedure.

Another common problem I see in my female patients is heel pain/plantar fasciitis. This condition usually develops from poor shoes, hard surfaces, or a small increase in weight. Pain is typically felt after periods of rest, such as in the morning when you get out of bed, and the pain is localized to the inside of the heel in most cases. 90% of patients who suffer from this issue can be treated conservatively with simple techniques. If untreated, injury to the plantar fascia can lead to heel spur formation and possibly the need for surgical intervention.

Nail fungus or onychomycosis is also another condition I see frequently in my female patients. There are basic rules that should be followed with nail polish use. First, nails should not be covered with nail polish for extended periods of time. Ideally, you should remove the polish from the nail surface prior to it chipping or peeling off on its own. Secondly, it is important to know that reds and oranges stain the nail more than any other color. The color will actually penetrate the nail plate, causing a yellow discoloration. Nails that are discolored in this fashion should be resurfaced to bring back the natural clear color of the nail plate. Lastly, if you enjoy pedicures, have your pedicurist follow the four-coat philosophy to reduce the chances of the polish causing damage to the nail plate. Have your pedicurist apply a base coat followed by two color coats and ending with a clear coat. Superficial fungal infections can also occur with significant polish use. This too can easily be treated with a simple resurfacing or even a topical antifungal medication. If the fungal infection becomes worse than a superficial issue, it is important to visit a podiatrist for evaluation of the fungal infection so proper treatment can be instituted. At this point, topical antifungal medication is unlikely to help the situation. Oral antifungal medication is very successful in treating severe fungal infections of the nail plate. In some cases, the nail plate may have to be removed to allow a new nail to regrow. There is a new and exciting treatment option on horizon for nail fungus that I will be offering in the near future. The treatment involves using a laser to treat the nail fungus. This treatment requires three visits over an eight week time period. The treatment is painless, does not involve any medications, and offers clinical improvement in 75% of people treated. FDA approval is expected this year and Ankle and Foot Institute will begin to offer this as a treatment option following approval by the FDA. Insurance will not cover this treatment option and patients can expect the cost to be roughly \$600 for the full treatment course.

Dr. Wittock specializes in both surgical and non-surgical treatments of conditions of the ankle and foot. He is double board certified in ankle/rear-foot reconstructive surgery as well as in foot surgery.



Meet The Expert

Do you have ankle or foot problems?



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is accepting new patients! We offer superior and innovative podiatric care, using the latest treatments and methods available.

Contact Dr. Wittock: (636) 717-1100