

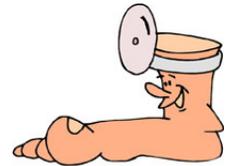
## Be Sweet to Your Feet

Your feet are used to take steps, to walk and to run. No matter what your age, having healthy feet is an important part of good health. Too often, people think that foot pain is normal. It is not. If you have foot pain, you should see a podiatrist to determine the problem and how to fix it.

Podiatrists are highly trained medical specialists who focus specifically on the foot and ankle. Their area of expertise includes diagnosis, treatment and helping you to keep your feet in a healthy condition. Our active lifestyles, an aging population and an anticipated increase in the number of Canadians developing diabetes have increased the demand for podiatric services.

### About the foot

Your foot is a very complex part of your body. Each foot contains 26 bones, which are held in position by hundreds of ligaments, tendons and muscles, making it an extraordinarily complex mechanism.



The total force accumulated on feet every day is well over one million pounds for the average adult. However, the foot acts as an amazingly versatile and complex set of shock absorbers that protect the body with every step. This is only one of many important reasons why you should take good care of your feet. Every day you put considerable stress on your feet, so it isn't surprising that your feet do hurt and/or develop various aches and ailments. When this happens, it is important to see a podiatrist.

### A few common conditions, ailments and preventative measures

- **Blisters** – painful, fluid-filled lesions often caused by friction and pressure from ill-fitting shoes, stiff shoes, wrinkled socks against the skin, excessive moisture or foot deformities. To lessen the chance of getting blisters, keep your feet dry, wear socks as a cushion between your feet and shoes and wear properly fitting shoes.
- **Corns and calluses** – a build-up of the skin that forms at the points of pressure or over bony prominences, calluses form on the bottom and sides of the foot while corns form on the top of the foot and between the toes. They are often caused by repeated friction and pressure from skin rubbing against bony areas or against an irregularity in a shoe or by hereditary disorders. To reduce the likelihood of a corn or callus forming on your foot, wear supportive shoes with a wide toe box and a low heel, use over the counter creams (void of any acid preparations) and use a pumice stone or file (if you are not a diabetic).
- **Ingrown nails** – a painful condition caused by the nail growing into the surrounding skin, leading to inflammation and possible infection of the toe. This is a serious condition for people with impaired circulation, diabetes or other systemic diseases. Although it is usually hereditary, it can also be caused by tight pointy shoes, restrictive compression stockings or improper nail cutting. Be sure to cut your toe nails straight across with only a very slight rounding at the corners in order to avoid creating a pointy edge, or visit a podiatrist on a regular basis to have the cutting done. Another option is to have the ingrown piece of nail removed permanently thereby eliminating the problem altogether.



Visit the Canadian Podiatry Medical Association at [podiatrycanada.org](http://podiatrycanada.org) for more conditions, ailments and preventative solutions.

source: Canadian Podiatry Medical Association, <http://podiatrycanada.org/index.php/foot-health>

### Safety Talk Discussion

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**