



Feet May Expose Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a disease marked by low bone density — the body loses too much bone, doesn't produce enough, or a combination thereof. Bones weaken, become brittle, and fracture.

Osteoporosis can be painful, debilitating, and socially isolating. It's most common in women over age 50 (due to a plunge in estrogen at menopause) but can also strike men and people younger than 50. It is estimated that one out of two women will eventually experience an osteoporosis-related broken bone; men, one out of four.

With 26 bones each, the feet are vulnerable to osteoporosis. They bear the weight of the whole body, and that stress is magnified by movement. In fact, an unexplained foot fracture is frequently the first indicator of osteoporosis.

Early signs of osteoporosis might include pain when walking, accompanied by redness and swelling along the top of the foot (metatarsal bones). However, being proactive can reduce your risk:

- Eat a diet with enough vitamin D and calcium (confer with your physician). Vitamin D aids calcium absorption into the bones; 10 to 15 minutes of midday sunlight exposure boosts vitamin D levels, too.
- Minimize intake of soda and high-sodium, prepackaged foods, which hinder calcium absorption.
- Quit smoking!
- Exercise regularly, including strength training, which builds up bone.
- Wear shoes that provide good support, cushioning, and protection.
- Start good health habits early in life.

If we suspect osteoporosis is impacting your foot/ankle condition, a bone-density test can confirm (or refute) our suspicion. It measures calcium and other mineral levels via a low-dose radiation X-ray.

Never ignore foot or ankle pain. Instead, schedule an appointment at our office. Early intervention can make a huge difference in your treatment and recovery.



About the Doctor

Matt Wettstein, DPM

Advanced Foot and Ankle is led by Dr. Matt Wettstein. Originally from Logan, UT, Dr. Wettstein completed his undergraduate studies at Utah State University before attending Des Moines University in the College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery. After graduating with top honors, he then completed his residency in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Wettstein is married and has four, wonderful, children.

Get Social w/Us





Plantar Warts Are Sole Survivors

Plantar warts are caused by a strain of HPV (human papillomavirus) and crop up on the sole of the foot. The virus frequently invades the skin through tiny, inconspicuous cuts and abrasions.

Teens tend to be more susceptible to plantar warts, but anyone who walks barefoot in warm, moist environments such as locker rooms, communal shower areas, and swimming pool decking — tropical paradises for the virus — is at risk. This is the most common route for the virus to spread.

Plantar warts are typically hard and flat, have well-defined boundaries, rough surfaces, and when left untreated can grow up to one inch in circumference. They are often grayish or brownish in color with pinpoint spots of black in the center (clotted blood vessels). Single warts can spread into clusters.

Plantar warts sometimes become painful, especially when they're centered on weight-bearing areas of the foot, such as the ball of the foot or heel. When a person compensates for the pain by subtly changing their walking pattern, new discomfort can pop up.

In many cases, plantar warts disappear on their own, although they often return for repeat engagements. Generally, self-treating a plantar wart with over-the-counter products containing acids or other chemicals to destroy it is not advisable — healthy tissue frequently gets caught in the crossfire. Diabetics should never self-treat.

If a plantar wart is causing you grief, give our office a call. Weapons in our treatment arsenal include cryotherapy (freezing the wart with liquid nitrogen); laser therapy, which burns off tiny blood vessels, thus starving the wart; a wart-removal preparation prescribed and supervised by our office; or minor surgery utilizing an electric needle to remove the wart.

November Is National Diabetes Awareness Month



According to the American Diabetes Association, diabetes affects over 34 million Americans, roughly 20 percent of whom don't realize they have it. Diabetes causes higher-than-normal blood sugar levels, which left untreated can lead to cardiovascular disease, blindness, kidney failure, nerve damage, lower-limb amputation ... even death.

With diabetes, the body does not produce insulin, produces some but not enough, or is unable to use insulin correctly. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas that facilitates the transfer of glucose (sugar) from the bloodstream to cells, where it is stored for future energy. When insulin is absent or processed incorrectly, glucose buildup in the blood will wreak havoc.

Feet are major targets of diabetes. Poor circulation hampers healing, subjecting minor cuts, scratches, blisters, etc., to a much higher risk of ulceration and infection. To pile on, nerve damage (neuropathy) hinders one's ability to feel pain, discomfort, or irritation. Not only are normally minor conditions slow to heal, they may not even be noticed ... and quickly worsen.

For instance, corns, calluses, ingrown nails, and dry skin (which may crack) can pose serious threats of infection. Neuropathy can spur muscle weakness and loss of muscle tone and lead to hammertoes and bunions, which add new friction points. Diabetes-related foot conditions are responsible for over 60 percent of non-injury-related amputations.

There is good news, however. A healthy diet, regular exercise, annual medical checkups (including a full podiatric exam), taking medication as prescribed, proper footwear, and daily foot checks enable most people to live a normal life.

If your feet are due for a podiatric checkup, schedule an appointment with us today. To learn more about diabetes, visit the American Diabetes Association website at www.diabetes.org.

‘George Likes His Chicken Spicy’

Sweating can be a lifesaver in that it keeps our bodies from overheating (or staying overheated). It can also be a nuisance with sweaty palms and excessive armpit drippage caused by the body’s reaction to fear, anxiety, and overall stress.

If you’re trying to avoid excessive perspiration levels, be aware of dietary effects. As usual, moderation is key.

For instance, downing multiple caffeinated beverages each day revs up the central nervous system, increases heart rate, elevates blood pressure, and rouses the sweat glands.

Once you surpass one beer or glass of wine, the body’s internal temperature can rise. The brain responds by barking the command for perspiration.

Your digestive system has to work overtime to digest fatty foods, raising the body’s temperature. By now, you know what that means.

Processed foods typically lack the fiber and enzymes that aid proper digestion. Many are salty, too. The body needs to rid itself of the extra sodium. It does so via the urine but may try to get a head start by sweating it out.

When protein-rich foods are broken down, a byproduct called urea is produced. The body may try to dispose of it through sweating. The term “meat sweats” has some validity.

Sugar- and carbohydrate-laden foods make digestion more challenging and can cause insulin spikes ... and perspiration.

Spicy foods frequently contain the chemical compound capsaicin, which produces that coveted (for some) burning sensation in the mouth. Capsaicin doesn’t actually raise the temperature in your mouth, but it tricks the nerves (and brain) into believing it, inducing a sweaty reaction. *Seinfeld’s* George Costanza knows the feeling.



Good Gift Ideas for the Foot Health-minded

The holidays are coming fast, so it’s wise to get your gift shopping finished as soon as possible! We’re all about foot and ankle health, but trying to survive a mall three days before Christmas is terrible for one’s well-being in general.

If you have someone in your life who could benefit from some extra foot comfort, we have a few superb gift suggestions for you. If you would like some more personalized suggestions, don’t be afraid to ask us. We’ll see what we can come up with!

- **Slippers (with arch support!)** – It’s hard to turn down a warm, cozy pair of slippers, but don’t just buy the first pair you see. Find a pair designed with arch support in mind, because even short times in slippers should keep feet comfortable (and especially if their house has hardwood floors).
- **An Anti-Fatigue Mat** – “A what?” you may be asking. These are mats that cushion feet and reduce the pressure they have to endure each day. It looks simple—and it is—but it may be the best gift for someone who spends all day standing in one spot.
- **A Foot Roller** – A loved one with heel pain will likely love the ability to massage their feet with a sturdy roller. These come in a variety of materials, but get one that is best suited for where they may most use it: a larger one for home or a smaller one for under a desk at work.
- **A Pumice Stone** – A great stocking stuffer for someone who is mindful of calluses. These can come in a variety of fancy compositions such as “natural earth lava”, which is great for a “wow factor.” However, standard pumice stones usually work just as well.



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High Ankle Sprains Aren't Garden Variety

The ankle is the rendezvous point of the tibia, fibula, and talus bones. Ligaments (tough, elastic connective tissue) hold them together, providing joint stability and enabling motion. Stretched or torn ankle ligaments equal a sprained ankle.

Most ankle sprains are “lateral” ones. The anterior talofibular ligament on the outside of the ankle typically gets injured when a person “rolls” their ankle. Pain, swelling, and sometimes bruising are its calling cards.

High ankle sprains occur far less frequently than lateral ankle sprains and involve injury to a different set of ligaments: the syndesmosis. The syndesmosis lies between the tibia and fibula, above the ankle joint (hence “high” ankle sprain). It provides shock absorption and prevents the tibia and fibula from splaying — a critical task, given the tremendous amount of force placed upon it when a person walks, runs, jumps, or cuts.

High ankle sprains are painful, but swelling is less of an issue compared to lateral ankle sprains, and bruising is typically absent. However, they take much longer to heal since they shoulder such a heavy load.

Contact sports that involve cutting quickly are primary sources of high ankle sprains (particularly football). Initial treatment includes RICE — Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation. After that, a podiatric exam is imperative.

If the syndesmosis is severely sprained, a screw(s) is sometimes placed between the tibia and fibula to hold them together to buy time for the ligament to heal (two to three months). If a screw is not necessary, athletes can often return to their sport in six to eight weeks' time, but the effects of a high ankle sprain sometimes linger for several months longer.