

FOOTNOTES 2011

Premier Podiatry - Dr. Scott O'Connor, DPM, FACFAS

Fall is a Beautiful Season for Walking

With the arrival of fall, there are plenty of opportunities to get outside and enjoy the season on foot. Whether it's a stroll through the neighborhood to admire the changing leaves, a brisk walk in the crisp autumn morning air, or a hike through mountains, woods, or fields, it's a great season for walking outdoors.

But foot pain can forestall fall walks. Foot pain has many causes. One cause of foot pain you might not be familiar with is tarsal tunnel syndrome.

Tarsal tunnel syndrome is similar to carpal tunnel syndrome, which affects the wrists. The tarsal tunnel is a narrow space on the inside of your ankle. It's covered with a thick ligament that protects the arteries, veins, tendons, and nerves inside. One of those nerves is the posterior tibial nerve, and when it gets pinched, it can

cause a tingling or burning sensation, numbness, or shooting pain.

Most people feel the symptoms of tarsal tunnel syndrome on the inside of the ankle, the bottom of their foot, or both. Sometimes the symptoms of the syndrome appear suddenly. Other times, activities like prolonged standing, walking or exercising can aggravate tarsal tunnel symptoms.

The common factor in the development of symptoms is pressure or irritation against the nerve. Possible causes of tarsal tunnel syndrome include soft tissue masses, varicose veins, inflammation or swelling due to trauma or tendonitis, flatfeet and diabetes.

It is very important to seek early treatment if you feel any of the symptoms of tarsal tunnel syndrome. Left untreated, the condition progresses and may result in



permanent nerve damage.

Don't let foot pain hold you back from enjoying autumn. Have that pain checked out by our office so you can resume your healthy, active lifestyle. 🍃



Yard Cleanup Can be Tough on Feet

Fall is the time to clear out all of the remains of summer gardens from yards. Here are a few tips for keeping your feet, ankles and toes safe this season!

- **Wear appropriate shoes for the task.** No matter how warm it is, forget about wearing sandals! Sturdy leather shoes with good support will protect your feet from sharp objects, including the blades of power equipment.
- **Keep children away from power equipment.** Power mowers, leaf blowers and chain saws should not be left out where kids are playing, as severe trauma can result.
- **Don't work on wet surfaces.** Wet grass and leaves can be very slippery, and ankle sprains and fractures can easily result... especially when carrying heavy loads across the yard.
- **Remember, yard work is a workout!** Warm up and perform stretching exercises, just as you would before working out at the gym, to avoid stressing muscles and tendons in the foot, ankle and calves. 🍃

Does Someone In Your House Have Diabetes?



November is American Diabetes Month, and a good time to remind family members with the disease about the importance of foot care.

With autumn ushering in cooler temperatures and drier air, it's important for people with diabetes to keep their feet warm and dry, and to apply moisturizer daily to prevent skin from itching or cracking. But moisturizer DOESN'T go between the toes, where it can lead to skin breakdown and infection.

Feet can get cold during chilly autumn nights, so anyone with diabetes should wear socks to bed if their feet get cold. They should NEVER use a heating pad or hot water bottle.

Here are some additional diabetes foot care guidelines:

- **Inspect your feet daily.** Check for cuts, blisters, redness, swelling, or nail problems. Use a magnifying hand mirror to look at the bottom of your feet. (If your eyesight is poor, have someone else do it for you.) Call your doctor if you notice anything.
- **Wash your feet in lukewarm (not hot!) water.** Keep your feet clean by washing them daily. But only use lukewarm water—the temperature you'd use on a newborn baby.

Wash feet using a soft washcloth or sponge. Dry by blotting or patting—and make sure to carefully dry between the toes.

- **Cut nails carefully—and straight across.** Also, file the edges. Don't cut them too short, since this could lead to ingrown toe nails.
- **Never trim corns or calluses.** No "bathroom surgery"—let your doctor do the job.
- **Wear clean, dry socks.** Change them daily. Avoid tight elastic bands (they reduce circulation). Don't wear thick or bulky socks (they can fit poorly and irritate the skin).
- **Shake out your shoes and inspect the inside before wearing.** Remember, you may not feel a pebble—so always shake out your shoes before putting them on.
- **Never walk barefoot.** Not even at home! You could step on something and get a scratch or cut.

Finally, make sure loved ones get regular check-ups with their foot and ankle surgeon to help prevent the foot complications of diabetes before they start. 🍀



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