

All about feet

Our feet endure a journey equivalent to walking around the world four times in our entire lifetime. Despite being as important as they are for any of us, they are often neglected. Ingrown toenails, calloused skin on the back of the foot and fungal infections between toes all indicate the fact that we do not give our feet their deserved time of the day.

This apathy takes a bigger toll on the people of our country since our climate is warm and humid which is very hospitable for bacteria and germs. Our winters are also tough on our feet with its raging dryness. Patches of dry and flaky skin in this season make our feet look a lot more aged than they actually are but that is not only why we should take good care of our feet. Below are some foot related health risks that are common in our country, with ways to address such risks.

Cuts or splinters: Small cuts or openings on the foot may prove to be severe for your health as they leave a way for germs to sneak in. Never go barefoot and always wear sandals or shoes to avoid germs.

Fungal infection between the toes: This problem occurs frequently in the winter. The main reason for this is not drying the feet properly after washing. Since we will

mostly be wearing closed-toed shoes throughout the winter, we will have to be extra careful about checking whether our feet are completely dry before putting the shoes back on. This is a good practice to avoid odorous feet as well.

Buerger's Disease: Typically found in smokers, this disease causes problems in the blood circulation of the limbs which may lead to ulcer and gangrene. Prevent this disease by avoiding tobacco products.

Diabetic foot: Diabetes makes feet vulnerable to dangerous problems such as ulcers on the foot. Therefore, diabetic feet require all the more care because the smallest of cuts and infections may turn deadly. A regular foot cleaning and hygiene routine is a must to keep these problems at bay.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS FOR MAINTAINING A GOOD FOOT CARE ROUTINE.

1. Use mild soaps and warm water to wash your feet daily.
2. Pat your feet dry after washing. Do not rub at your feet.
3. Use moisturizer regularly to avoid dry and calloused feet. Keep the lotion away from between your toes.
4. Examine your feet daily for blisters, cuts, or any kind of sores.
5. Do not tamper with a blister that you get from wearing new shoes. Put a bandage over it and wear a different pair of shoes.
6. Cut your nails straight across so there are no corners or ingrown nails.
7. Avoid cutting cuticles as it leaves an opening in your skin. Soften them with soothing oil instead.
8. Use natural fibre-made socks that are absolutely free of dirt. As much as socks are good to keep your feet clean and warm, a dirty sock will establish a colony of harmful bacteria in no time.
9. Buy shoes in the afternoon when your feet will be at their most swollen after the day's wear and tear. Buying shoes at that time will ensure that they are never too tight for your feet.
10. Wear shoes that protect you from both cold and moisture.

RE-THINK PEDICURES:

You might feel the need for a more thorough cleaning of your feet at times. Pedicures are a relaxing way of providing a complete foot cleaning and moisturizing procedure for both men and women. A good pedicure after a stressful day helps let go of the stress and enjoy life's small pleasures. However, take some precautions while getting a pedicure so that it is safe for you.

1. Do not take a pedicure if you have open wounds on your feet.
2. Choose a salon with impeccable hygiene. Check if they sterilize their instruments after every use.
3. Ask for an individual bowl for soaking your feet because a bowl connected to a pipe may get germs from the pipes which are difficult to clean. The material of the bowl also needs to be less prone to germs; glass is a good option since it can be cleaned easily.

4. Talk to your pedicurist if you have diabetes or other problems. The massage will be gentler and more cautionary.

MEDICAL FOOT CARE:

A pedicure works on your feet on a superficial level which may not be enough for your feet. We often tend to take this matter lightly but it needs to be reasserted that your feet are not supposed to hurt. Persistence of foot pain might mean something more than simple worn out feet. See a podiatrist if there is an inflammation or pain in your feet.

A new practice of mixing pedicures with podiatry is also on the emergence where trained nurses give you the comfort of a pedicure with necessary podiatric attention. You may want to consider getting such medical foot care if your feet are sensitive and if you have a persisting problem in your feet.

Proper foot care has to be given due importance as winter is waiting just around the corner with all its dryness. Keeping your feet clean, dry and sweat free will get you the best looking and best feeling feet. Also, while enjoying outside walks in the mist and the chill, covered shoes will be the best way to go.

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