

MEET YOUR TEAM

Dr. Craig H. Thomajan

Rhiannon Torrez
Practice Manager

Byron Cox
Medical Assistant

Tana Hager
Patient Coordinator

Amanda Walkup
Patient Scheduler

Jeanne Gaida
Community Relations Director

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS!

Look for a special email in your inbox when your birthday rolls around, created just for you!

If you don't receive your birthday greeting but would like to in the future, please visit our Contact Page and let us know the date!

REFERRALS MEAN THE WORLD TO US!

There is no greater compliment you can pay us than to entrust us with the referral of a friend or family member. We'd like to thank the following people for doing so this past month:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Amelia G. | Janett F. |
| Ryan B. | Kylie B. |
| Amie V. | Laurie W. |
| Angela R. | Lisa P. |
| Chase L. | Lorie M. |
| Coston P. | Margaret P. |
| Dana W. | Naomi M. |
| Ed B. | Nicole F. |
| Gail C. | Soncia L. |
| Irlene Z. | Victoria C. |

If you pass along our name to someone close to you, please let us know so we can say thanks!



Baby, it's cold outside.

MAKE FOOT HEALTH A PRIORITY!

When bundling up for cooler winter weather, we often make a priority of keeping our hands, head and core plenty warm, while wrongly assuming that our feet will adapt just fine. In many cases, feet are the most susceptible part of your body when dealing with winter-related health issues. This is especially true for adults and seniors with diabetes.

During cold weather, the body moves the blood away from outer limbs such as toes in order to maintain a constant body temperature. That explains why your toes feel colder and subsequently numb with prolonged exposure to lower temperatures.

Here are a few helpful reminders of how to best maintain your foot health during the winter season:

DAILY FOOT EXAMS

Especially for those with neuropathy, foot exams are a must. It is preferable to perform a foot exam at the same time each day, including the soles of the feet, to identify any color change, blisters, open sores, swelling red streaks, peeling or cracking. For those not able to see the soles of their feet, you can use hand-held long-arm mirror to inspect your feet. Also remember to check toenails to see if they have fungus or are ingrown or have infections.

KEEP FEET CLEAN AND DRY

Wash feet daily with lukewarm water at 90 degrees or less. Use a mild hypoallergenic soap with a soft washcloth or sponge. Do not soak feet for longer than 10 minutes. Dry skin carefully by patting, not rubbing. Make sure to dry between each toe, which can help reduce the risk of fungus. Going barefoot indoors is not advised, even indoors. Socks should be made of mixed fibers such as cotton and acrylic, but not nylon, to help wisk away perspiration.

MOISTURIZE

Diabetes can damage the nerves, causing you to perspire less, which leaves your feet very dry. This can cause itching, peeling, and a risk of infection due to cracks in the skin. A good moisturizer can be very helpful, and is best applied when the skin is damp from a bath or shower. Apply to the top and bottom of the foot, but not between the toes to lessen risk of fungus forming.

WEAR COMFORTABLE SHOES

Avoid wearing tight toe boxes and high heels. Pointy high heels are dangerous for your feet and promote bunions that may require surgery in the future. Wear waterproof boots in the rain and warm boots in the cold.

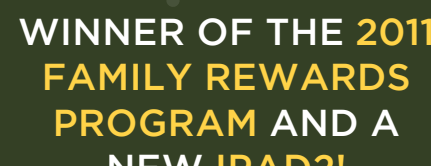
TREAT WOUNDS QUICKLY

Even the smallest cut or scrape can cause an infection, so use a topical antibiotic ointment after washing with mild soap. If it does not improve within a few days, a visit to a podiatrist is necessary.

If you are experiencing any foot issues during the winter season, contact Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists for an evaluation and assessment of your overall foot health. There's not better gift you could give yourself than happy, healthy feet.

CONGRATS JESSICA SHIREY

WINNER OF THE 2011 FAMILY REWARDS PROGRAM AND A NEW IPAD2!



This month, Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists announced Jessica Shirey as the winner of our Family Rewards iPad2 Drawing. Dr. Thomajan and the rest of us here at Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists would like to thank everyone who participated in our Family Rewards Program since it began in May. There is no greater compliment you can pay us than to entrust us with the referral of a friend or family member.



KEEPING YOUR FEET HEALTHY DURING YOUR Winter Get-Away

For many families, the winter season offers a perfect backdrop for a vacation to the mountains of Colorado, New Mexico and beyond. Whether skiing, sledding, skating or simply strolling, it's important to understand the correlation between winter excursions and foot health.

In skiing and snowboarding, particularly at an intermediate or advanced level, high speeds and force of gravity place tremendous levels of impact trauma on the lower extremities, especially on steep and bumpy runs. Skating also puts tremendous stress on the ankle. If you have any pre-existing foot conditions, such as bunions, corns or calluses, or circulatory problems, it is definitely worth visiting a foot and ankle specialist to receive a clean bill of health.

Many forms of winter sports footwear can also have an impact on your foot health. Properly fitted ski boots and skates are a must. Without a snug (but not too tight) and accurate fit, the pressure exerted by the constant forward motion and lateral movement of skiing and quick turns of skating will surely result in discomfort or injury. If boots and skates are too loose, toes quickly get irritated in the toe box. If they are too tight, pressure leads to blisters and abrasions, not to mention loss of circulation that may result in a host of painful problems. If you are not sure your ski boots or skates fit properly, or if an apparently proper-fitting pair still hurts, take them to a podiatrist for an evaluation and proper fitting.

Here are some problems to watch out for when you are enjoying your winter get-away:

Blisters – The friction caused by winter sports footwear often causes blisters. Do not pop a small blister, but if it breaks on its own, apply an antiseptic and cover with a sterile bandage.

Bone Problems – Bunions, bony prominences at the joints on the inside or outside of the foot, often become irritated in ski boots or skates. Pain at these joints may indicate a need for a wider or better-fitting boot. Other preexisting conditions, such as hammertoes, and Haglund's Deformity (a bump on the back of the heel) can be irritated by an active winter sports regimen. If pain persists, contact your foot and ankle specialist.

Frostbite – Identifying the symptoms of frostbite is critical. Skin-color changes, from blue to whitish, can't be seen under a boot, but if toes are extremely cold for a prolonged period or feel burning or numb, there is a danger of frostbite. People with a history of frostbite often get it again in the same place.

Sprains and Strains – The stress of skiing and skating can result in sprains and strains of the foot and ankle. They can be treated with rest, ice, compression, and elevation (RICE). If pain persists, seek medical attention.

Subungual Hematoma – Pressure in the toe box of a ski or skate can cause bleeding under the toenail known as a subungual hematoma. Without treatment from a foot and ankle specialist, it may result in loss of a toenail.

The last place you want to find yourself during a winter excursion to the mountains is stuck on the couch treating injured feet. Taking the necessary precautions regarding your choice and fit of footwear as well as the overall care of your feet will result in minimal foot pain and maximum fun.

It's Boot Season!

TIPS TO BALANCE FASHION & COMFORT

In Texas, winter weather can appear and disappear almost overnight. For that reason, cooler temperatures are a cause for celebration for those who enjoy wearing fashionable boots.

When buying boots, from pointy, round and square toes to stiletto and stacked heels, the American Podiatric Medical Association offers helpful tips to ensure that your feet feel as good they look:

• Look for a boot that offers stability, usually a wider heel of less than two inches in height.

• Make sure that the shape of the boot is wide enough to match the contour of your foot. If boots are too narrow, it will result in blisters and bunions.

• When shopping for boots, try them on while wearing the hosiery or socks that you intend to wear regularly. This will help ensure a proper fit.

• Pick a boot that has a firm heel structure. Just because the boot fabric covers your ankle, doesn't mean it provides adequate support.

• Select a boot with a rubber sole and traction on the bottom to help prevent slipping, especially during inclement weather.

It's also important to note that during winter months, feet tend to sweat more because shoes are enclosed with thick hosiery or socks. It makes sense to select a boot made of leather, which absorbs moisture, versus a synthetic material that does not absorb sweat and may lead to fungal infections and other issues.

Following these simple tips can help put you on the right track to look great in your stylish boots, while also enjoying comfortable, happy feet.

WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL A PODIATRIST?

YOU SHOULD CALL A PODIATRIST ANYTIME YOU EXPERIENCE PAIN, DISCOMFORT, OR NOTICE CHANGES IN YOUR FEET. KEY INDICATORS INCLUDE:

- You have persistent pain in your feet or ankles.
- You see noticeable changes to your nails or skin.
- Your feet are severely cracking, scaling, or peeling.
- There are blisters on your feet.
- Your toenail is getting thicker and causing you discomfort.
- You have heel pain accompanied by a fever, redness or numbness and tingling in your heel.
- You have diabetes or certain other diseases that effect your feet.

FREE EDUCATION REGARDING FOOT CARE



If you know of a friend, family member or colleague that may be interested in learning how to prevent foot issues resulting from running, diabetes or heel pain, please take advantage of our complimentary books, *Diabetes and Your Feet*, *Keep Running! Identify and Prevent Common Running Injuries* and *Heel Pain: Very Common, Yet Often Untreated*.

All were written by Dr. Craig Thomajan, founder of Austin Foot and Ankle Specialists.

CLICK HERE TO REQUEST YOUR COMPLIMENTARY COPIES!

