



MEET YOUR TEAM

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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:

- Buckner H. Joyce A.
- Dianne H. Landon O.
- Glenda F. Melissa P.
- Jacquelyn F. Stuart T.
- Jim H.

And a huge "Thanks!" goes out to Christina C. as well.

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

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!

There's No Fun WITH BUNIONS

Bunions are those unsightly enlargements or bumps that occur on the inside areas of your feet. The visible bump actually demonstrates changes in framework of the front section of the foot. With a bunion, the big toe leans toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This moves the bones out of alignment, producing the bunion's "bump."

CAUSES

Improper footwear is one of the most common causes of bunions. Tight or small shoes can cause bunions, especially in women. Many more women experience bunions than men, mostly due to foot wear including high heels, tight flats, or too small shoes. Bunions can also be hereditary, developing from a weakness in the foot's bone structure.

SYMPTOMS

- Pain or soreness
- Inflammation and redness
- A burning sensation
- Protruding "bump" on foot

IMPACT

A bunion deformity can cause a wide range of problems for individuals and can consequently require a varied approach to treatment. It is important to note that bunions are a progressive deformity, meaning that in most cases the condition will become more severe over time. No one can predict how fast the deformity will progress or to what extent it will cause debility or

symptoms, but most foot specialists would agree that sooner or later, it will worsen. Bunions, by nature, can cause pain in certain shoes, become a common site for arthritic changes, lead to secondary compensatory problems such as hammertoes or pain in the fat pad area, or they may cause serious aesthetic or shoe wear concerns for certain individuals.

TREATMENT

The most common and easiest way to treat bunions is proper shoe wear. You need to allow your foot the space it needs. Some people assume they need to choose health or comfort, but luckily you can often achieve both with the numerous choices now available in modern footwear. Austin Foot & Ankle Specialists offers a wide variety of footwear options that can help address your bunion issues.

Whatever the extent of involvement, a bunion deformity should warrant serious consideration, and it is always advisable to visit your foot and ankle specialist for an evaluation.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

With so many brands and styles of shoes, I am overwhelmed trying to determine the best match for my personal needs. As an active adult, what should I look for when buying shoes?

- Mary H., Round Rock

That is a terrific question, and I hear that question asked very often by patients of all ages. Here are some tips to help point you in the right direction when buying shoes:

- Watch for shoes that have seams over areas of the foot that may effect common conditions such as bunions.
- Avoid shoes with heavy rubber soles that wrap over the top of the toe area (such as seen on some running shoes), as they can catch on carpets and cause an accidental fall.
- Flat-soled shoes are the healthiest shoes for your feet. If you must wear a high heel, keep to a heel height of two inches or less, and limit wearing them to three hours at a time.
- Laced, rather than slip-on shoes, provide a more secure fit and can accommodate insoles, orthotic devices and braces.

It is perfectly understandable that you want to balance style with performance and comfort, and you should not have to compromise on either front. Good luck with your shoe shopping!

Visit our Contact Page to submit your question and receive your gift of Miracle Foot Cream if yours is chosen to be featured in our monthly newsletter!

5 Foot Issues MEN SHOULD NEVER IGNORE

MEN OFTEN RESIST GOING TO THE DOCTOR WHEN THEY'RE SICK WITH THE COMMON COLD OR FLU, AND UNFORTUNATELY THIS HOLDS TRUE EVEN IN CASES OF MORE SEVERE PAIN.

ONE OF THE COMMON, YET CONSISTENTLY UNDER-REPORTED HEALTH CONCERNS AMONG MEN INVOLVES FOOT AND ANKLE ISSUES. MANY OF THE CONDITIONS ARE TREATABLE, HOWEVER, AND THE BEST OUTCOMES RESULT FROM EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT FROM A FOOT AND ANKLE SPECIALIST.

HERE ARE FIVE OF THE MOST COMMON FOOT PROBLEMS THAT A MAN SHOULD NEVER IGNORE:

HEEL PAIN is often caused by tissue inflammation, but can also result from a broken bone, a tight Achilles tendon, a pinched nerve, or other problem. A qualified physician will know how to diagnose and treat the true cause of heel pain.

ANKLE SPRAINS always require a prompt visit to the doctor. Men who skip out on medical care are more likely to suffer repeated ankle sprains and then develop chronic ankle instability.

BIG TOE STIFFNESS AND PAIN develops slowly over time, as cartilage in the big toe joint wears down. This eventually leads to arthritis. The sooner a man has this diagnosed, the easier it is to treat.

ACHILLES TENDONITIS usually develops from a sudden increase in physical activity, such as when men

play weekend sports. Chances of an Achilles tendon rupture can be reduced by treating the symptoms of Achilles tendonitis: pain and tenderness on the back of the foot or heel.

INGROWN TOENAILS can pierce the skin, open the door for bacteria to enter the body, and convince some men to perform dangerous "bathroom surgery." Few men know that a doctor can perform a quick procedure that will end the pain and permanently cure an ingrown toenail.

If you or a loved one is experiencing these or other foot and ankle issues, it's time to make an appointment with Austin Foot & Ankle Specialists. The more quickly you treat a serious injury, the more quickly you can resume a pain free lifestyle and truly enjoy your favorite activities.



DON'T LET FOOT PAIN HANDICAP YOUR Golf Season

As millions of avid golfers get ready for another season of eagles, pars and bogeys, they should be aware of potentially serious foot problems that can result from years of playing the game.

Although golf is not considered a rigorous sport, the physical act of repeatedly swinging a golf club on the driving range or on the course can lead to a condition known as hallux limitus, a jamming and deterioration of the big toe joint. The movement and weight transfer that occur during the swing's follow through can cause this problem and other chronic foot ailments.

When golfers follow through on their swing, they can overextend the big toe joint on the back foot. Those who have played the game avidly for several years eventually can wear out the cartilage or jam the big toe joint. The likely outcome, if left untreated, is painful arthritis in the big toe, which would make it very difficult to continue playing golf.

A history of trauma to the big toe area and bone structure also can precipitate the condition. Individuals with a long first metatarsal bone (big toe), for example, are more susceptible to joint compression and hallux limitus.

If golfers experience pain in the big toe area when playing, they should consider it a warning sign that intervention is necessary before the joint becomes arthritic. In most situations, orthotics can be prescribed to provide relief, but others with advanced cases may require surgery.

OTHER GOLF-RELATED FOOT ISSUES

Another foot problem that is common in golfers is a neuroma, or pinched nerve, at the bottom of the foot. The weight transfer to the front foot that occurs in the follow through applies pressure that, over time, can cause a pinched nerve. Also, golfers are advised not to wear shoes that have a spike located directly beneath the ball of the foot. The pressure from that single spike, magnified by the several thousand steps taken during an average round, can cause intense pain and swelling in the ball of the foot. Fortunately, any pair of golf shoes can be made more foot friendly without sacrificing traction by removing the poorly located spikes.

There is nothing more entertaining than hitting the links with friends, and with Austin weather, golf is possible almost year-round. Don't let common foot issues cause you to cancel a tee time, or worse, force you to choose another hobby entirely due to chronic injury. Visit your foot specialist for an evaluation and to discuss treatment options.

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 FOR RUNNERS AND DIABETICS

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

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

CLICK HERE TO REQUEST YOUR COMPLIMENTARY COPIES!