

## Foot Health

We had a foot-washing on Maundy Thursday, which brought to mind the topic of foot health. Spring is finally here, and with it comes the urge to get outdoors and enjoy nature. As we start doing more outside, we need to start paying attention to our feet. Foot ailments and injuries increase as the weather warms up and as we start doing more with our feet: gardening, hiking, wearing lighter socks or sandals, etc. Our feet are miraculous; they are strong, flexible, designed to function in a way unique to human beings. Did you know that the average person walks the equivalent of five times around the earth in his or her lifetime? In addition to transportation, we rely on our feet for support and balance even while standing still.

Foot doctors tell us the foot can be compared to a finely tuned race car, or a space shuttle, vehicles whose function dictates their design and structure. And like them, the human foot is complex, containing within its relatively small size, 26 bones (our two feet contain a quarter of all the bones in our body), 33 joints, and a network of more than 100 tendons, muscles, and ligaments, as well as countless blood vessels and nerves. Diseases, disorders and disabilities of the foot or ankle affect the quality of life and mobility of millions of Americans.

### Top Ten Foot Health Tips

As we learn to care for our feet, I would like to share a few tips to help keep feet healthy:

1. Don't ignore foot pain—it's not normal. If the pain persists, see a physician.
2. Inspect your feet regularly. Pay attention to changes in color and temperature of your feet. Look for thick or discolored nails (a sign of developing fungus), and check for cracks or cuts in the skin. Peeling or scaling on the soles of feet could indicate athlete's foot.
3. Wash your feet regularly, especially between the toes, and be sure to dry them completely.
4. Trim toenails straight across, but not too short. Be careful not to cut nails in corners or on the sides; it can lead to ingrown toenails. People with diabetes, poor circulation or heart problems should not treat their own feet because they are more prone to infection. Seniors may notice that eyesight and dexterity may decline with age, putting us more at risk for cutting ourselves accidentally; so help may be needed to care for the feet of our elders.
5. Make sure that your shoes fit properly. Purchase new shoes later in the day when feet tend to be at their largest and replace worn out shoes as soon as possible.
6. Select and wear the right shoe for the activity that you are engaged in (i.e. running shoes for running).
7. Alternate shoes—don't wear the same pair of shoes every day.
8. Avoid walking barefooted—your feet will be more prone to injury and infection. At the beach or when wearing sandals always use sunscreen on your feet as the rest of your body.
9. Be cautious when using home remedies for foot ailments; self-treatment can often turn a minor problem into a major one.
10. If you are a person with diabetes it is vital that you see a physician at least once a year for a check-up.

[Adapted from The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA)]

### ***Isaiah 52:7***

<sup>7</sup>How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'