

Keep Feet Safe During Mowing Season

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, over 37,000 Americans suffer mower-related injuries each year — many of them involving the feet, many of them preventable.

With mower blades whirring at 50 revolutions per second, injuries can be devastating: severe lacerations, fractured bones, severed tendons, and amputated toes. Even superficial wounds need prompt medical attention to prevent infection. The following precautions can help:

- Wear work boots or yardwork-specific shoes while mowing. Too many people mow barefoot or with minimal foot protection such as flip-flops, sandals, or sneakers.
- Don't mow wet grass with a push mower. It's too easy to slip on rain-soaked grass while mowing, which is a leading cause of mower injuries. Strains and sprains are more likely, too.
- Use a mower with a release mechanism that automatically shuts off the mower when the operator's hands lose contact with it.
- For push mowers, mow across slopes (side to side), not up and down. Conversely, riding mowers should be driven up and down slopes, never across them.
- When operating a riding mower, never allow a child to ride on your lap. Too many injuries occur when children step onto or off the mower. In addition, experts recommend a child be at least 12 years old to operate a push mower; 16 to operate a riding mower.
- Never mow on a riding mower while in "reverse." It opens the door to tragedy. Keep children and pets out of the yard while mowing.
- Prior to mowing, remove potential projectiles from the yard, such as rocks, twigs, toys, etc.

For homeowners with yards, lawn mowing is a fact of life. Mowing-related injuries, however, should not be.



About Our Doctor of the Month

Dr. Allison Willkom

Dr. Allison Willkom is passionate about helping patients overcome foot and ankle conditions. She is board qualified with the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery and specializes in all aspects of foot and ankle surgery, whether it be an acute injury or a chronic condition. Dr. Willkom is committed to providing comprehensive care for both simple and complex foot and ankle treatment needs.

As a working wife, a mother, a practicing physician, and a former competitive (yet still active) athlete, Dr. Willkom appreciates the importance of healthy, functional, and pain-free feet throughout all walks of life. She recognizes the physical, mental, and emotional toll that injury and illness can take, and aims to utilize her expertise to maximize prevention and expedite patient healing.



Did you know that we also provide podiatry, audiology, and optometry care in over 400 senior living facilities throughout Minnesota?

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Bedtime Tips for Diabetic Feet



There's nothing like a nice, relaxing bath before bed! While you're enjoying a little downtime, we want to provide some safety tips for diabetic feet as you get ready to hit the hay.

- Before you bathe, check your feet closely for anything out of the ordinary—look for things like blisters, discoloration, and cuts that should be treated immediately to avoid infection. (If you see something, be sure to make an appointment with us right away!)
- Next, if your toenails need trimming, use sterilized clippers, making small cuts straight across so that nails are even with the tips of your toes.
- When drawing your bath, always check the temperature with your arm...stepping in with nerve damaged feet may lead to dangerous burns if you don't realize the water is too hot.
- Always use mild soap and warm water—not hot—and be sure not to soak too long, since that can impede the healing process if you have any wounds.
- When you get out, it's very important to dry your feet thoroughly, and don't forget to dry between your toes!
- Keep dry, cracked heels at bay by lightly applying moisturizer, making sure not to get it between those toes you just dried so well.
- Slip on some cozy socks if you like, but make sure they're not too tight.
- Lastly, if you decide to get up for a midnight snack, always put on your slippers to protect your feet from harm, but check them first in case there's anything in them that could damage your feet.

Follow these bedtime tips and you'll be sure to have a peaceful night's sleep.

We hope these bedtime tips lead to peaceful nights of sleep for you! *Sweet Dreams!*

May Awareness Month

Mother's Day 5/9 • National Women's Health Week 5/9–5/15

National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

Why is it important for your feet to be physically active every day?

Activity every day can:

- Strengthen bones and muscle.
- Increase flexibility of muscles, tendons, and ligaments.
- Increase blood flow.
- Improve physical endurance and stamina.
- Improve overall health.

Arthritis Awareness Month

- Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis. Also known as "wear and tear" arthritis, OA is a chronic condition caused by the breakdown of the cartilage, which cushions the ends of the bones where they meet to form joints. This breakdown causes the bones to rub together, causing stiffness, pain and loss of joint movement. In the foot, OA most commonly affects the big toe, but it can affect the ankle joints and joints of the heel bone, inner and outer mid-foot. Aging and obesity make OA more likely in the feet.
- Gout is a form of inflammatory arthritis that occurs when the body is unable to remove excess uric acid. The turns into needle-shaped crystals and gets deposited in tissues of the body, including the joints. The first symptom of gout is intense pain and swelling in the big toe. Over time, lumps of uric acid may form beneath the skin of the feet. Symptoms include a rapid onset of severe pain, which usually reaches its peak after 4 to 12 hours. Lingering pain from gout attacks can persist for weeks, and later attacks tend to last longer and affect more joints.





Why Do Wart Myths Persist?

Unightly and uncomfortable warts have long been an affliction of legends and tall tales. Can you get them by touching frogs or toads? Can you get rid of them with yogurt, pennies, or duct tape? Why do myths about warts keep perpetuating?

To get to some ideas why, it helps to ensure what warts actually are. A wart—whether it's a plantar wart on the foot, a palmer wart on the hand, or just a plain old wart anywhere else—is the result of a viral infection. Once this virus enters the skin, it causes a quick growth of cells on the outer layer of the skin. This is the wart.

While warts can occasionally be painful, they are otherwise harmless in a vast majority of cases (very few cases end up cancerous, and most of these are not on the feet and hands). Warts may also go away on their own over time. Some can be gone in as few as 10 weeks, while others may take up to 2 years or not go away at all!

So why the myths? We're not saying there might not be something in your aunt's honey-sage spread that may help clear warts. But if you're trying a home remedy and a wart goes away on its own, for unrelated reasons, you might be inclined to believe that did it. It's only human nature to.

As long as you're not hurting yourself, trying a remedy for warts is likely not a problem. But if your warts persist, you have reason to believe something more is wrong, or you're just plain sick of seeing them, contact your friendly professionals at Midwest Podiatry Centers.



Dr. Willkom Recommends

Healthy Southwest Quinoa Salad

For the salad

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 cup quinoa well rinsed and drained
- 1 3/4 cups low sodium vegetable broth or water
- 1 cup canned corn drained
- 15 ounce can black beans rinsed and drained
- 1 red bell pepper chopped
- 4 green onions sliced
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

For the lime vinaigrette

- 3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Heat the 2 teaspoons olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and saute until fragrant, stirring, about 1 minute. Add the quinoa and vegetable broth (or water) and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until the liquid has been absorbed, about 12-16 minutes. Remove from the heat.
2. While the quinoa cooks, prepare the lime vinaigrette. In a small bowl or jar, combine the dressing ingredients. Whisk (or shake in a jar with a lid) until well combined.
3. Transfer the cooked quinoa to a large bowl and stir in the corn, black beans, bell pepper, green onions and cilantro. Add the dressing and stir gently to combine. Taste and adjust seasonings as necessary.
4. Serve salad warm or cold, with guacamole or sliced avocado if desired.

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Turning Sobering Numbers Around

According to the CDC's National Diabetes Statistics Report for 2020, over 34 million Americans have diabetes. Over time, elevated blood-sugar levels can cause serious damage to the cardiovascular system, kidneys, eyes, nerves, and feet.

With regard to feet, nerve damage can diminish sensation (peripheral neuropathy); cardiovascular disease can slow healing (peripheral arterial disease). Individually, these conditions are serious health threats. Combined, you've got even bigger problems. When foot injuries go undetected, healing lags, wounds become infected, ulcers develop, and potential amputation enters the picture.

In the United States, nearly 100,000 diabetes-related amputations are performed each year. Globally, it is estimated that a diabetes-related amputation occurs every 30 seconds.

Ten percent of diabetics have foot ulcers; 10 to 15 percent of foot ulcers do not heal; close to one-quarter of those cases will require amputation. Unfortunately, once the ball gets rolling, it's tough to stop. Those who have undergone one diabetes-related amputation have up to a 50 percent chance of requiring another one in three to five years.

Despite the glum numbers, there is good news. Type 2 diabetes (90 to 95 percent of diabetes cases) is preventable with early intervention and lifestyle changes. For those who already have diabetes, it can be managed successfully.

A healthy diet, daily exercise, maintaining a healthy weight and blood pressure, consistently monitoring blood-sugar levels, daily foot inspections, taking medications as directed, and regular, comprehensive podiatric exams are key. Absent circulatory or neurological issues, a yearly exam should suffice. Otherwise, more frequent visits may be recommended.

When it comes to diabetes, amputation need not be part of the equation. If you're due for an exam, contact our office today.

