



Don't Let Halloween Trick Kids' Feet and Ankles

Young kids eagerly anticipate Halloween trick-or-treating. Dressing up, a boatload of sweets at the rainbow's end — what's not to like? But don't let Halloween get the best of their feet and ankles.

Avoid costumes that extend below the middle of their shins. Long robes or dresses can get tangled with feet and result in strains, sprains, and fractures. It's best to avoid costume footwear, which is sometimes bulky and frequently uncomfortable. It can be a tripping hazard and promote blisters. Sneakers are the ticket (even if they don't match the costume).

Your trick-or-treaters are best served by wearing synthetic-fiber, moisture-wicking socks, too. Wet feet pave the way for blisters, and late-October evenings might be chilly. Keep extra shoes and socks on hand in case puddles come into play.

Parents should be watchful for untied shoelaces. A lightning-quick tumble can do a number on feet, ankles, knees, and hands. Double knots can help.

Carry a bright flashlight to scope out high curbs, elevated sidewalk, steps, holes or dips in a lawn, slippery leaves, and fallen branches. High visibility is good for passing traffic as well.

After the loot has been gathered, encourage your kids to spread out their candy consumption over the next few weeks. Good dietary habits established early in life can help them to avoid diabetes down the road, a disease with serious implications for the feet and other parts of the body.

A little foot/ankle soreness or fatigue after a long trick-or-treat excursion isn't unusual. However, if discomfort lingers after a couple of days, there may be an injury. Contact our office to schedule a thorough evaluation.

Meet Our Doctor

Dr. Brent Larson



Dr. Brent Larson serves patients at our clinics in Plymouth and Minnetonka. Some of his primary focuses include sports medicine, diabetic wound care, ingrown toenail treatment, and foot and ankle surgery. Dr. Larson also specializes in forefoot and reconstructive rearfoot/ankle surgery and is a highly skilled surgeon.

Dr. Larson graduated from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry. He then attended the Des Moines University School of Podiatric Medicine in Iowa and completed his residency training at Richmond University Medical Center.

Having grown up in Plymouth, Minnesota, Dr. Larson is an alum and continued supporter of Wayzata High School.



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When Joints Have a Breakdown

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative joint disease characterized by the breakdown of cartilage in one or more joints. Cartilage is connective tissue at the ends of joint bones that protects and cushions them during movement — it prevents bone-on-bone grinding.

In the course of a lifetime, the typical person will walk over 100,000 miles, or four times the circumference of the earth. That's a lot of wear and tear on feet and ankles, which is why older Americans are most vulnerable to osteoarthritis.

Those who suffer significant injuries to joints earlier in life are at higher risk, too ... and might develop osteoarthritis prior to reaching their golden years. People with flat feet or high arches are also more susceptible, since those conditions direct excessive stress onto joints. The big-toe area, midfoot, and ankle are prime targets.

Osteoarthritis is marked by joint pain and inflammation, as well as stiffness, swelling, and limited range of motion, which is bound to affect walking and other activities to some degree. It's frequently even more of a jolt after waking in the morning or other long periods of inactivity. Some people also develop a bony protrusion (spur) at an affected joint, prompting blister or callus formation.

Early-stage osteoarthritis can be managed with conservative measures. Braces, custom orthotics, physical therapy, low-impact exercises, cortisone injections, immobilization, and medication (over-the-counter or prescription) often prove beneficial.

Surgery might be the only option available to ease pain and improve function for those who delay a podiatric exam until the disease hits an advanced stage.

Any persistent foot or ankle pain warrants an appointment at our office. The earlier we see you, the more manageable/treatable your condition will be.

Pumpkin Carving Pointers

1. Pick a pumpkin that is fresh and has no bruises, a sturdy stem, and a flat bottom.
2. Cut the lid on an angle—not straight up and down—so it doesn't fall inside.
3. Scoop and scrape like crazy! Remove all the insides and thin the interior walls.
4. Tilt the pumpkin upward and carve a face carefully with up and down slices. You can use a serrated knife for detail work.
5. Don't throw your scraps away! You can use them for ears, eyebrows, a tongue, or other fun and creative features.

BONUS secrets courtesy of Good Housekeeping:

Keep your pumpkin fresh by sealing cut edges with petroleum jelly to lock in moisture.

Sprinkle a little cinnamon on the lid and the lit candle will make it smell like pumpkin pie!





No Sweat! Help for Excessively Sweaty Feet

If your feet break out into a sweat just thinking about putting on socks and shoes, you likely have your parents to blame. You see, having excessively sweaty feet is thought to be an inherited trait—not necessarily the family tradition anyone wants to carry on! Even worse, this condition, known as hyperhidrosis, can cause issues beyond stress and embarrassment. When feet are constantly wet, especially when trapped inside socks and shoes, the risk of fungal infection is high, and yes, foot odor is common. However, you can control your fate. To counteract these occurrences, good hygiene is crucial.

- Wash feet with an antibacterial soap daily, and don't forget between your toes!
- Be sure to dry feet thoroughly and apply foot powder, cornstarch, or anti-fungal powder to your feet, as well as your shoes. You can also try applying antiperspirant to both.
- Wear moisture-wicking socks and shoes made of breathable materials like leather or mesh.
- Change socks regularly and rotate the shoes you wear so they have time to dry out.

You don't have to be destined to a life of excessively sweaty feet. Try these at-home treatment options, or come see us for additional help. There are prescribed oral medications as well as medical procedures that can alleviate the symptoms of severe cases. We're here for you—so don't sweat it!



French Bread Pizza Mummies

Yield: 4 servings; prep time: 5 mins.; cook time: 10 mins.; total time: 15 mins..

These easy-to-make French bread pizzas will elicit smiles from kids and grown-ups alike. And they taste good, too.

Ingredients

- 8-oz. whole-wheat French bread baguette
- 1 cup marinara sauce
- 8 black olive slices (from 2 olives)
- 4 slices (.75 oz. each) mozzarella cheese

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Cut the bread in half lengthwise, then cut each half crosswise in 2 pieces to give you 4 pieces total.
3. Place the bread cut-side-up on a baking sheet. Spread 1/4 cup of marinara sauce on each piece.
4. Place 2 slices of olives on each pizza to make eyes. Randomly lay out mummy cheese strips over the sauce. Bake on the center rack until the cheese is melted and bubbling, and the bread is crisp (about 8 minutes).

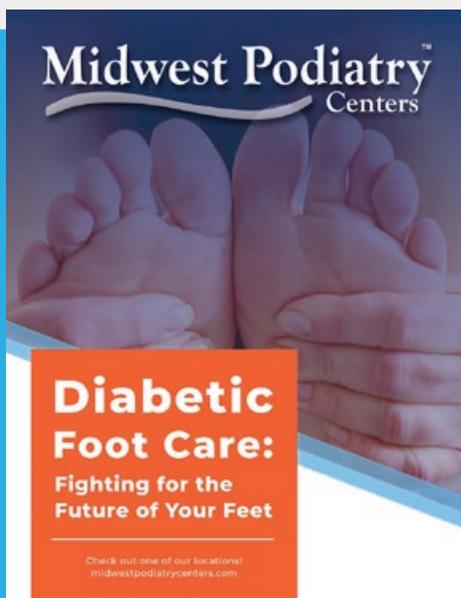
Recipe courtesy of www.skinnytaste.com.

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Are Flats Where It's at for Footwear?

You are likely aware of the downsides of wearing high heels for long periods of time, whether from one of our previous newsletters, sagely advice from a friend or loved one, or simple life experience.

If heels are bad, though, then does that mean you should go the opposite way? Flatter is better?

Not quite.

While high heels do indeed tend to force pressure toward the front of the foot, leading to pain and potentially making problems like bunions and hammertoes worse, going too flat can lead to problems as well.

If you go for absolutely flat shoes, such as ballet flats and even flip-flops, you are giving your feet almost no arch support whatsoever. You might as well be walking with cardboard tied to your feet.

Without good arch support, you are risking strain-related problems such as plantar fasciitis, a very common cause of heel pain. The way your body tries to compensate for the lack of support can also lead to problems in the knees, hips, or back.

Sneakers and general shoes with arch support are a much better choice, and if you do want to wear heels, keep them 2 inches at the highest and use them sparingly. For more advice on the best types of footwear for your individual lifestyle and needs, don't be afraid to ask us. We're happy to help!