

# FOOT NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SPRINGFIELD PODIATRY AND ACCURATE FOOT & DIABETIC CARE

February, 2022 Edition

## **DRY FEET:**

One thing our winter weather brings is dry skin, or xeroderma. During the winter months, the humidity levels in the air are often low. Couple that with heaters blasting to keep us warm indoors, and this leads to dry air and dry skin. Some other causes include inadequate hydration, excessive washing of the hands, use of harsh soaps or detergents, showering or soaking in hot water, swimming in a chlorinated pool and friction. Often, this dryness causes itching and painful cracking of the skin, particularly in the feet.

Symptoms of dry skin include a sensation of tightness, skin that looks and feels rough, itching, scaling and flaking, fine lines, gray, ashy skin, redness, and cracking that may bleed. Cracks in the skin can lead to infections, and for patients with diabetes, poor circulation or a compromised immune system, this can be dangerous. Excessively dry skin can also aggravate atopic dermatitis (eczema).

Fortunately, there are a number of things you can do to prevent and treat dry skin. Using a humidifier in your home helps to add moisture to the air. Avoid lengthy hot showers and don't shower every day if it is not absolutely necessary. Use less irritating soaps such as Dove or Cetaphil cleanser, and be sure to drink plenty of fluids each day. If swimming in a chlorinated pool, shower immediately afterwards with a moisturizing cleanser and apply lotion. In fact, a moisturizing lotion or cream should always be applied right after a bath or shower.

Another cause of dry skin can be swelling of the legs. The fluid that accumulates in the tissues draws the oils out of the skin, often leading to dry, scaling skin, fine cracks, redness and itching. In this case, it is vital to control the swelling in addition to applying emollient creams. When dry skin becomes inflamed

(dermatitis), the result is itchy skin that we are tempted to scratch. As you can imagine, this often leads to open wounds that bleed and drain and may become infected. To prevent unintentional scratching (and intentional scratching), steroid creams such as hydrocortisone or Cortaid can help reduce the inflammation in the skin. Additionally, be sure to cover all exposed skin in cold weather, and wear gloves if your job requires your hands to be in water.

In our practice, we frequently see dry, calloused and cracked heels. Callus formation is just an excessive build up of the outer layer of skin called the stratum corneum. This can be caused by excessive friction, dryness of the skin, and hereditary factors. If the callus is very thick, emollient creams have difficulty penetrating down to the deeper layers of the skin to properly moisturize and repair the skin. In these cases, the callus can be trimmed or sanded to facilitate treatment. This can be accomplished at home with various products such as a PediEgg, pumice stone, loofa or callus file. For our high-risk patients, we do not recommend home care with any sharp devices.

Should any deep cracks occur that bleed and/or are painful, we advise our patients to treat these like any cut or open sore. Cleanse the crack with soap and water or peroxide, then apply an antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Bacitracin, etc.) and a band aid until the crack fully heals.

As mentioned, regular application of moisturizing creams and lotions are crucial to prevent and treat dry skin. But not all creams are created equal. If you have significant scaling or callus formation, look for an exfoliating cream to soften and remove dead skin. This may include such ingredients as urea, lactic acid, salicylic acid or alpha hydroxy acid. If you have sensitive skin, these options may be irritating. So, you may prefer a thick lotion such as Eucerin, Lubriderm or Cetaphil. To moisturize at night, apply a petroleum based product such as Vaseline petroleum jelly, Aquaphor or Vitamin A+D ointment then cover with socks. For severely dry skin, apply plastic wrap then socks at night for a deep moisturizing treatment.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Our annual Shoe Drive started in November and runs through March 31, 2022. Please drop off your new or gently used shoes, boots, sandals and slippers to either office to help those in need. Thank you for your continued support!

## **PERSONALLY SPEAKING**

For those of you who frequent the West Chester office, you have likely been greeted by the pleasant, smiling face of Malikah. The mother of three children, her youngest will graduate from high school in June, so she is very excited to see where her daughter will decide to go to college. This will make her an empty nester! Malikah is learning to knit again which she finds very relaxing. She loves “feel good movies” and watches Hallmark Christmas all year long. Malikah is considering going back to school for her Medical Assistant certification so she can expand her contributions to the practice.

## **MYTH BUSTERS**

“Dry skin can resolve by drinking more water.” While adequate hydration is important to our overall health and wellbeing, simply drinking more fluids will not cure your dry skin. As mentioned above, dry skin requires topical therapies and a change in certain habits in order to improve. And typically, while we can improve the dry skin, continued proper skin care is necessary to maintain healthy skin.

## **FUN FACTS**

The average person walks about 110,000 miles in his or her lifetime.

## **WHAT'S NEW**

Since we are on the topic of dry skin in this issue, we would like to introduce a new product in our practice called PodoExpert moisturizing foam. This revolutionary skin care product does more than moisturize; it actually REPAIRS the damaged skin barrier by restoring the lipids that act like mortar to a brick wall. Using just a small amount of this foam twice daily will transform your dry, scaling and cracked skin in just four weeks. Please ask about our PodoExpert moisturizing foam at your next visit and try it for yourself! We promise you will be amazed by the result!

## **QUOTES**

“Without Valentine’s Day, February would be...Well, January.” – Jim Gaffigan

## **PUNNY STUFF**

Can February March? No, but April May.

## **PUZZLE:**

Call today for your foot health evaluation!

In Drexel Hill, call 484-459-5954

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In West Chester, call 610-436-5883

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Or visit us at [www.drsiegerman.com](http://www.drsiegerman.com)

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