

# FOOT NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SPRINGFIELD PODIATRY AND ACCURATE FOOT & DIABETIC CARE

January, 2022 Edition

## **COLD FEET!**

Happy New Year to all! Let's hope that 2022 brings an end to this ongoing pandemic and we can see what everyone looks like without a mask again. Along with the New Year, we have those cold winter temperatures that prompt us to bundle up when we go outside. During the winter months, we see many cases of cold feet and toes in the office. Not the kind of cold feet where the bride-to-be is seen running back up the aisle while a stunned groom stares in disbelief. No, the cold feet we see are often a reflection of poor circulation or of a vasospasm.

With poor circulation, there is generally some clogging of the arteries that bring vital blood flow to the legs and feet. Known as arteriosclerosis or atherosclerosis, this tends to occur slowly over time, leading to such symptoms as cold feet and toes, muscle cramping with activity or while sleeping, loss of hair on the legs, feet and toes, thinning of the skin and color changes to the skin. If the arteries are not too badly clogged, medications can improve blood flow through the narrowings in the arteries. However, if the blockages become so severe as to cause significant pain, cramping and the threat of limb loss, surgical intervention by a vascular surgeon or interventional radiologist may be required.

Many people experience cold and discolored feet and toes from a vasospasm. In this case, the arteries are not clogged with fat and cholesterol plaques, but instead, the vessels constrict when exposed to cold. While this condition is fairly common, some develop Raynaud's syndrome where the vasospasms are severe and prolonged. In these cases, it is not uncommon to see prolonged purple toes, painful blisters, called chilblains, and even black areas of skin dying due to a lack of blood flow and oxygen that may necessitate amputation of one or more toes.

To minimize the symptoms of vasospasm, we recommend keeping the hands and feet covered and warm. Avoid exposure to cold outside but also indoors by using gloves to handle cold items in the refrigerator and freezer. Even sitting by an air conditioner vent in the summertime can cause a vasospasm event. Prescription niacin (Vitamin B3) can relax and dilate constricted blood vessels, and in extreme cases, prescription nitroglycerine can be applied topically to the feet and toes.

Another cold weather problem is frost bite. Occurring mostly in fingers, toes, ears and noses, this involves a thermal injury to tissues and potential death of soft tissues. Mild frostbite is called frostnip which presents as burning, pins and needles and localized numbness. Superficial frostbite produces skin changes, usually redness and a silvery coloration to the skin. As frostbite progresses, this leads to more severe deep soft tissue injury below the skin surface.

The affected area should be slowly warmed in a whirlpool or in warm, NOT hot, water. This will often produce blisters within 24-48 hours that will later drain and leave behind blackened areas of skin that have died from the thermal injury. If you suspect frostbite, seek medical attention as soon as possible.

So be sure to keep those feet and toes bundled, warm and dry with proper shoes/boots and socks this winter to maintain healthy blood flow. Use caution with socks that are too thick or multiple layers that can cause constriction of the feet in shoes as this will reduce blood flow. If your feet are cold at night in bed, warm the bed with an electric blanket or heating pad before you put your feet between the sheets, then turn off the device once you are nestled in place. Should you experience any of the symptoms discussed here, please call us for an evaluation. Stay warm!

## **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**

Mary has been with our practice longer than any other staff member. Those of you who frequent our Drexel Hill office know Mary as one of our outstanding receptionists. She loves to travel and plans on visiting all 50 United States. With 39 down and only 11 to go, she is well on her way to her goal. Mary has also visited 20 National Parks, her favorite being the Grand Canyon in Arizona. Additionally, Mary enjoys astronomy. So whether at home or traveling the country, she can be seen looking up at the nighttime sky.

## **MYTH BUSTERS**

Being cold does not make you sick. Despite our mothers' insistence that not dressing warm enough in the cold weather will give you a cold, this is not true. Exposure to the cold virus (rhinovirus) causes the common cold, but over exposure to cold can weaken your immune system to make you more susceptible to illness. So mom was partially right.

## **FUN FACTS**

40-45 percent of body heat is lost through the head and neck due to increased blood flow to these areas, so wear a scarf and hat or hood in the cold weather!

## **WHAT'S NEW**

We are very excited to announce our new PAIN FREE ingrown nail removal system called OnyFix! This system works with your natural nail growth to gradually change the curvature of the toenail and permanently eliminate painful ingrown

nails without surgery or needles! Ask us about revolutionary process at your next visit or call to schedule a consultation today.

## **QUOTES**

There are always flowers for those who want to see them. – Henri Matisse

## **PUNNY STUFF**

If you have two left feet, it is impossible to start the New Year off on the right foot.

## **PUZZLE:**

Call today for your foot health evaluation!

In Drexel Hill, call 484-459-5954  
(springfieldpodiatry@springpod.comcastbiz.net)

In West Chester, call 610-436-5883  
(accpodiatry@gmail.com)

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

Dr. Julie Siegerman and Dr. Siavash Rostami

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