



SENIOR HEALTH

Foot Problems

HOW TO FIND RELIEF

SOME COMMON FOOT PROBLEMS

Bunions

When the big toe joint is out of line and becomes swollen and tender, it's called a bunion. Poor-fitting shoes pressing on a deformity or inherited weakness in the foot is a common cause. Wearing wide-cut shoes or protective pads may provide some relief. Your doctor may recommend topical or injected medications, whirlpool baths or surgery.

Bone Spurs

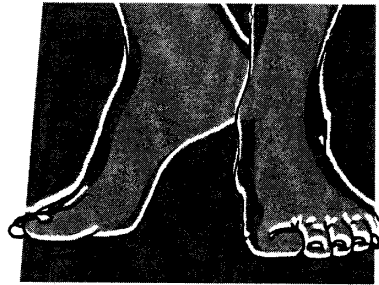
Muscle strain and irritation from standing for long periods, poorly-fitting shoes and excess weight can cause calcium growths in the bones, called spurs. Bone spurs can be painless or cause severe pain. Treatments include proper foot support, heel pads and heel cups. Get a recommendation from your podiatrist or surgeon.

Corns and Calluses

Corns, which form on the top of your foot, and calluses, which form on the bottom, are the skin's reaction to pressure and friction. Better-fitting shoes can bring some relief. Check with your podiatrist or doctor before trying over-the-counter products. They can be harmful, especially if you have diabetes or poor circulation.

Bacterial and Fungal Infections

Feet that are enclosed in a damp, dark, warm environment are very likely to develop a bacterial or fungal infection (such as athlete's foot). Redness, blisters, peeling and itching are common symptoms. If the



infection is not treated promptly, it can become chronic and difficult to get rid of later. Alternate shoes from day to day and always wear clean socks. Change socks and shoes whenever your feet become wet. If you're prone to infections, dust your feet each morning with an over-the-counter fungicide powder.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR FEET

- Wear comfortable, properly fitting shoes with low heels and thick soles.
- Keep your feet clean and dry.
- Change your socks daily.
- Keep your feet supple by applying creams or oils to them. Any cracks or breaks in your skin could lead to infection.
- Massage your feet in the morning, at night or after bathing.
- Elevate your feet.
- Give your feet a soothing, warm foot bath.