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## Don't Let Bunions Become a Pain

A bunion, also known as hallux valgus, is described as a bump on the side of the big toe. While it sounds like something minor, a bunion is much more than just a bump. The visible bump reflects changes in the bony framework of the front part of the foot causing the big toe to lean toward the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead. This throws the bones out of alignment—producing the bunion's bump.

A bunion is usually a symptom of inherited faulty foot mechanics, such as flat feet or low arches, which put abnormal stress on the front of the foot. Bunions may also be associated with different forms of arthritis. When cartilage protecting the joint starts to deteriorate, the joint can become damaged and be left with a decreased range of motion.

A common misconception about bunions is that wearing shoes that crowd the toes will cause them. This is false, but it could make it progressively worse causing symptoms to appear sooner. Pain can range from mild to more severe, which could make it hard to walk in normal shoes or heels. The skin and deeper tissue around the bunion may also become swollen or inflamed.

Conservative treatment for bunions includes using bunion pads, wearing comfortable shoes, sandals or athletic shoes, and avoiding high heels. These remedies can help reduce pressure on the bunion and keep it



from progressing. If conservative treatment isn't helping, surgery may be necessary. The type of procedure depends on the severity as well as age, general health, and activity level.

Sometimes bunions just need to be watched, however, to determine the best treatment for your bunion, schedule an appointment with our office for a full exam.

## How to Avoid Running Injuries



Runners' feet are the most vulnerable to injury, so it's important to take the proper steps to strengthen and condition them to improve performance. Here are common running injuries and how to avoid them:

**Heel Pain:** The most common complaint of foot pain is caused by inflammation of the ligament that holds up the arch, known as plantar fasciitis. Treat it by doing stretching exercises, wearing sturdier shoes with arch support, icing the foot, taking anti-inflammatory medications if pain persists.

**Achilles Tendon Pain:** Tendonitis can occur in the Achilles tendon or other areas of the foot and ankle and serves as a warning sign of overuse. Overdoing it with training can cause tendonitis, especially in beginners who are doing too much too soon. Treat it by resting, icing the foot and taking anti-inflammatory medications. If the heel pain persists, make an appointment with our office for orthotics or physical therapy.

**Pain in Ball of Foot:** Pain in the area below the toes is often a neuroma—pinched nerve in between the toes—or inflammation of the joints where the toes meet the foot bones. This can cause pain, numbness and burning in the area. Treat it by wearing sturdy shoes with arch support or make an appointment at our office for padding, injections or orthotics to help relieve pain.

**Stress Fractures/Broken Bones:** Being able to walk on the foot doesn't mean it's not broken. Stress fractures can occur in the foot and be slower to show symptoms like swelling or pain. Treat it with RICE - Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. If pain and swelling continue after three or four days of RICE, make an appointment with our office to get it properly examined as soon as possible.

# Travel Tips for Preventing Deep Vein Thrombosis

As we near the end of the school year and temperatures start to warm up, everyone is booking their summer trips. Long car or plane rides put you at risk for a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT).

A DVT occurs when a blockage or blood clot forms in veins deep in the leg or other parts of the body. If the clot breaks free and travels through the bloodstream, it can get stuck in the lung causing a pulmonary embolism, which can make breathing difficult and could even result in death. Some people are more at risk for developing a DVT. Varicose veins, blood clotting disorders, pregnancy or recent childbirth, obesity, tobacco use, and heart disease are all risk factors for a DVT. People over 40 years old, those who've recently had surgery and those who are immobile due to inactivity or because they're wearing a cast are also at a higher risk for the condition.

People with a DVT may have little to no symptoms. Some signs include swelling in the leg, pain in the calf or thigh or warmth and redness of the leg. **Contact our office if you have any of these warning signs**



## • since you may need to be evaluated immediately.

If you're at risk for a DVT and have plans for a long trip this season, here are tips to reduce the chance of developing a blood clot.

- Exercise your legs every two to three hours to keep the blood flowing back to your heart. Walk up and down the aisle of the plane or train, rotate ankles while sitting and take regular breaks on car trips.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- Consider wearing compression socks.

