Boot season isn't the time to ignore your feet Follow these tips for good foot care to avoid infection, ingrown toenails



It is almost boot season. While the temptation may be there to ignore your feet now that sandal season is over, resist the urge. Those tootsies need more support than ever. They are about to be wrapped in heavy socks and stuffed into clunky boots with no room

to breathe. Start the fall winter season off right and make your feet a priority, especially if you are diabetic, which can complicate things. People with diabetes are much

more likely to have a lower limb amputated that people without diabetes because the disease can cause poor blood circulation and nerve damage in the feet, making them vulnerable to developing ulcers, infections, deformities and brittle bones.

Here are some tips for good foot care:

- · Inspect feet daily for injuries that could lead to dangerous ulcers. If there is loss of sensation in the foot these things can crop up without you realizing it.
- · Gently wash feet in lukewarm, not hot, water everyday, but don't soak them for a prolonged period of time as that can cause dryness, especially if you are diabetic.
- · Moisturize feet but avoid the area between the toes as the skin is very thin.

• Never trim corns or calluses as this can lead to a serious infection. See your doctor.

- · Trim toenails very carefully and never shorter than the end of the toe. Cut straight across or lightly follow the natural curve of the toe and use an emery board to smooth to avoid rough edges.
- · Inspect the insides of the shoes before wearing for any rough spots that may have developed

One of the biggest problems among seniors is toenail disorders, and fungal and bacterial conditions. Feet spend a lot of time in shoes which are a warm, humid and dark place. That is the perfect condition for fungus to grow. Since wearing shoes is not usually optional, and going barefoot

which airs out the feet but can prove risky, here are some tips for avoiding the above conditions and for keeping your feet healthy:

· Wear shoes that actually fit and replace them when they are worn out. When buying new shoes, shop later in the day when feet tend to swell and put the new shoes on a flat surface before buying. Make sure they are level and don't tilt in either direction, which could signal a manufacturer defect.

- · Wear acrylic or wool socks as they wick away moisture from the feet, and change them often. Be sure they are not too tight which can restrict circulation.
- Alternate shoes everyday. Wearing the same pair all the time doesn't give them a chance to dry out

from sweaty feet.

• Spray the inside of the shoes with a disinfectant. Let dry. Use an anti-fungal powder as prevention. Topical fungal treatments rarely work on toenails and oral medication may be necessary.

Another common foot injury is plantar fasciitis or heel pain. Continual stress causes small tears in the plantar fascia resulting in inflammation and eventually a heel spur. It is a painful condition.

There are three principles of treatments for plantar fascitis.

- · Reduce the inflammation with ice and anti-inflammatory medication. Ask your doctors for the one best for you.
- · Protect the plantar fascia from further trauma,

through taping the foot, shoe inserts or wearing a shoe with a stiff shank that doesn't bend in the middle

of the arch but across the ball of the foot. · Stretch and strengthen the ankle, foot, and calf muscles. If symptoms

persist, you may need

physical therapy. Heed this advice and you'll certainly put your best foot forward. And ladies, for a real mood booster paint your toenails the brightest fall color you can find. I prefer orange. Even if no one sees them, it will give you

Carol Higgins Taylor is an advocate for seniors and owns Bryant Street Public Relations in Bangor. Email her at seniorbeat@gmail.com.

support groups

Support group listings run as space permits. Items are due at least seven to 10 days before the Thursday of publication. Email: weekly@bangordailynews.com. Mail: The Weekly, P.O. Box 1329, Bangor ME 04402.

BANGOR:

- · Al-Anon meetings for relatives and friends affected by the excessive drinking of someone else, Bangor area and throughout Maine. Meeting times and locations, maineafg. org or 800-498-1944.
- · Alzheimer's Association Caregiver Support Groups, 7-9 p.m. second and last Thursdays, Westgate Center for Rehabilitation and Alzheimer's Care, 750 Union St. 942or kminer@nathealthcare.com.
- Bangor Area Narcotics Anonymous meeting for families and loved ones of addicts. 6-7 p.m. Thursdays, St. Francis Center (old firehouse) across from St. Joseph emergency entrance, 368 Center St. Janice, 299-8802.
- Bangor Area Parkinson's Group, 2-3:30 p.m.

third Sundays, Acadia Hospital. Room reserved. Open to patients and caregivers.

- Bereavement support for parents who have lost a child. 6-7:30 p.m. third Brookings Wednesdays, Smith Family Center, 163 Center St. Judy, 889-9025.
- · Celiac Sprue Support Group, 7 p.m. third Tuesdays except in December, St. Francis Center. 294 Center St.
- Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder, or CHADD, 6-7 p.m. third Tuesday, office of Barry Rubin, Bangor Family Counseling, Suite 335, 96 Harlow St. Free. 990-1555.
- Eastern Maine Crohn's and Colitis Support Group for IBD patients, caregivers and family members, 6-7:30 p.m. second Thursdays, Dr. Frank Chapman Conference Room, 2nd floor, St. Joseph Hospital. 974-9724.
- Eastern Maine Medical Center Bereavement Support Group, 7-8:30 p.m. second and fourth Thursdays of each month, Cascade Room, Riverside Inn, 495 State St. Sandra Levesque,
- · Food Addicts in Recov-

ery Anonymous, 6:30 p.m. Mondays, First United Methodist Church, 703 Essex St. Free. Twelve Step recovery program for those suffering from food obsession, overeating, under-eat-

ing and bulimia. 781-321-

9118 or 942-1738.

· National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support Groups for anyone affected by mental illness, Acadia Hospital. Information and meeting schedule, Jean-Ann, 949-5658,

Betsy, btsygrs@yahoo.com. · Maine Kids-Kin Greater Bangor Support Group for grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings and other family members who are raising a relative's child, 6 p.m. first and third Tuesdays, Families and Children Together, 304 Hancock St. 941-2347 or 866-298-0896.

 Nicotine anonymous, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays, conference room, Maine Veterans Home. Provides help for those who have quit smoking and want to stay that way. Larry, 843-7563.

· Ostomy Support Group ostomy patients, their families and caregivers, 3-5 p.m. second Tuesdays, Felician Conference Room, second floor, St. Joseph Hospital. Free. Rose Cyr, 907-1550 or rosanne.cyr@sjhhealth.com.

 Overeaters Anonymous for those with eating disorders, 10 a.m. Saturdays, 5 p.m. Sundays, Strauss meeting room St. Joseph Hospital, Center Street; and 10 a.m. Mondays and noon Thursdays, Redeemer Lutheran Church, 540 Essex

St. Barbara, 990-2025. · Safe Place, for those who have lost someone to suicide, 6:30-8 p.m. first Wednesdays, St. Joseph's Healthcare Park, 900 Broadway. Peer led group with no fee. Associated with American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. afsp.org.

· Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance support groups for women affected by partner abuse. Day and evening groups; child care activities. Spruce Run-Womancare Alliance, 800-863-9909.

· St. Joseph Diabetes and Nutrition Center Diabetes Support Group, Willette Conference Center, Building 1, St. Joseph Healthcare Park, 900 Broadway. Meetings facilitated by certified diabetes educator. Group members share tips on diabetes management. Open to all. Free. 907-1187.

Bangor TOPS 0311, (Take off Pounds Sensibly), 9-10:15 a.m. Fridays, Nason Manor community room, 140 Hancock St. Vicky, 852-9061.

BREWER:

• Bangor Area Recovery Network recovery education and support, 6-7 p.m. Wednesdays, BARN Community Recovery Center, 142 Center St. Free. 561-9444 or bangorrecovery@ gmail.com.

· Central Maine Brain Injury and Stroke Support Group, 4-5 p.m. third Mondays, conference room, Brewer Center for Health and Rehabilitation. Open to survivors and caregivers. Patty, 989-7300, ext. 134. **BUCKSPORT:**

 Cancer Support Center of Maine support group for cancer patients, 12:30 p.m. first Wednesdays, Bucksport Regional Health Center, 110 Broadway. Bring bag lunch or snack. 469-6383. **HOLDEN:**

Vestibular Support Group for those experiencing dizziness, imbalance, vertigo or ringing in the ears, Brewer Physical Therapy and Spine Clinic, 51 Main Road. 989-4122. **ORRINGTON:**

Al-Anon, 6-7 p.m. Fridays, East Orrington Congregational Church, 38 Johnson Mill Road. 284-1844 or questions@maineafg.org.



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