

~ Healthy Lifestyle ~

Why women's feet hurt more in autumn and what you can do about it



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As the weather cools and women switch from open to closed shoe styles, the transition can be painful.

According to Dr. Thanh Dinh, DPM, FACFAS, a foot and ankle surgeon and president of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) two of the most common types of pain women feel in their feet in autumn come from bunions and hammertoes.

The ACFAS offers the following insights into treating these conditions and easing associated pain:

Understanding Bunions

A common myth is that tight-fitting or narrow shoes cause bunions. The truth is, bunions are genetic. However, symptoms occur most often when wearing high heels or other styles that crowd the toes.

"A bunion is a change in the bony framework of the front part of the foot and is most often caused by an inherited faulty mechanical structure of the foot," Dr. Dinh explains. "When the big toe leans towards the second toe, rather than pointing straight ahead, it throws the bones out of alignment and produces the all-too-familiar, bunion bump."

Pain from bunions most often occurs along the side of the foot near the big toe. Women sometimes describe it as a throbbing that continues even after taking off their shoes and putting up their feet. The site of the bunion can also be inflamed or red and can feel numb or have a burning sensation.

Demystifying Hammertoes

"A hammertoe is a 'bending' or contracture deformity of one or both joints of a toe," Dr. Dinh says. "The abnormal bending puts pressure on the toe when wearing shoes and causes problems to develop -- which can start mildly and worsen over time."

Women with hammertoes can experience pain or irritation of the affected toe when wearing shoes. Corns and calluses (a buildup of skin) on the toe, between the toes or on the ball of the foot can occur from the constant friction against the shoes with hammertoes. Inflammation, redness or a burning sensation are also possible and in severe cases, open sores may form.

Next Steps

Proper shoe selection and conservative treatments can go a long way in managing pain from bunions and hammertoes. Foot and ankle surgeons recommend avoiding high-heeled shoes and styles that crowd the toes together, as well as using padding and taking anti-inflammatory medication.

While these techniques address pain, they don't generally stop bunions or hammertoes from getting worse. Surgery is commonly performed by foot and ankle surgeons to both correct the deformities and alleviate pain. Those who suffer from both ailments can have surgery to correct the foot deformities at the same time.

"Recovery time varies based on the procedures performed, the advancement of the deformities, the number of toes involved, age and other factors, but the success rates for the surgeries are encouraging," says Dr. Dinh. "Plus, the advanced procedures foot and ankle surgeons perform today to fix bunion deformities reduce the likelihood of a recurrence," she adds.

Experiencing increased foot pain? Make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon to see how they can help alleviate pain. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to access the Find an ACFAS Physician Tool.

While everyone loves fall fashions, certain shoe styles for women can exacerbate painful foot conditions. Taking steps to manage these conditions can make for a pain-free autumn and beyond.

-- StatePoint

Why Now is the Time to Schedule That Check-Up or Screening

If you haven't visited your physician since the start of the pandemic, medical experts say that the time is now to book check-ups and screenings for the entire family.

"The pandemic has had wide-scale negative health consequences beyond COVID-19. Many Americans have delayed important routine health services critical to keeping them healthy, including vital pediatric immunizations and preventive cancer screenings. Prevention is the best cure, so it's important to get your health back on track today," says Gerald E. Harmon, M.D., American Medical Association (AMA) president.

With school beginning and the cool weather months ahead, the AMA urges Americans to call their physician's office to learn if they are due for preventive care or screenings.

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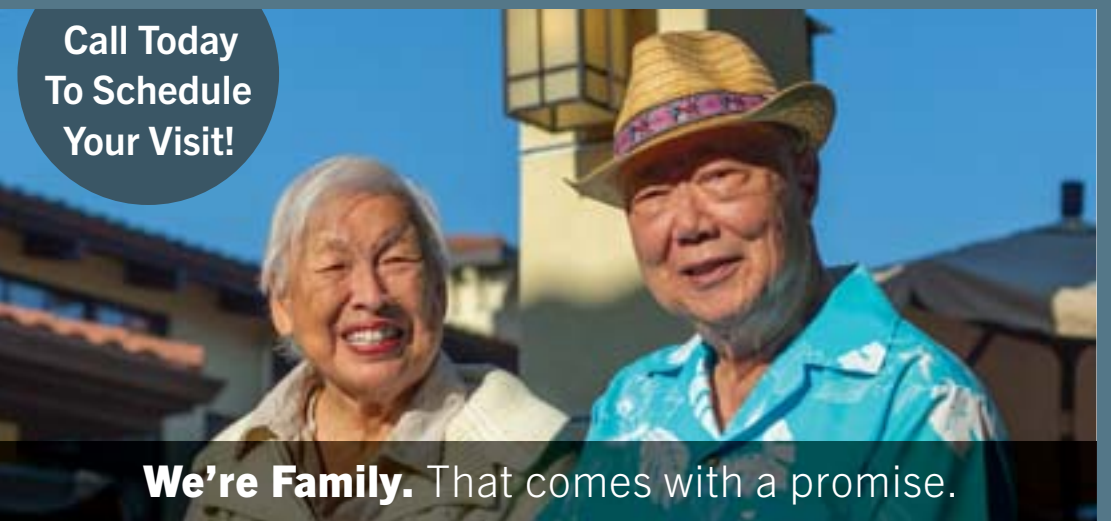
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