

All Toes On-Deck

Tips for Protecting Feet from the Heat

One perk of a beach-bound vacation is knowing that instead of snow soaking thru your Choos or having your feet feeling toasty in sweaty Uggs, you can lounge happily with your toes dangling in the warm weather, shoe-free with the sand at your feet. But alas, the dream does come with its own set of tootsie troubles. “Even if you are just lying still on your back soaking up the rays, your feet are still vulnerable,” says American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) member Dr. Jane Andersen. “You can seriously sunburn your feet and no matter how upscale your hotel, athlete’s foot can lurk in all public pool areas.”

Wouldn’t you rather spend time collecting sea shells instead of doctor’s bills? No worries. There are ways to prevent these future foot predicaments so you can go back to your sun-kissed dreams and enjoy a liberated foot experience.

1. Limit walking barefoot as it exposes feet to sunburn, as well as plantar warts, athlete’s foot, ringworm and other infections and also increases risk of injury to your feet.
2. Wear shoes or flip-flops around the pool, to the beach, in the locker room and even on the carpeting or in the bathroom of your hotel room to prevent injuries and limit the likelihood of contracting any bacterial infections.
3. Remember to apply sunscreen all over your feet, especially the tops and fronts of ankles and don’t forget to reapply after you’ve been in the water.
4. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. This will not only help with overall health, but will also minimize any foot swelling caused by the heat.
5. Keep blood flowing with periodic ankle flexes, toe wiggles and calf stretches.
6. Some activities at the beach, lake or river may require different types of footwear to be worn so be sure to ask the contact at each activity if specific shoes are needed. To be safe, always pack an extra pair of sneakers or a pair of protective water shoes. If your shoes will be getting wet, they should be dried out completely before your next wear to prevent bacteria or fungus from growing.
7. If you injure your foot or ankle while on vacation, seek professional medical attention from a podiatric physician. Many often only contact a doctor when something is broken or sprained, but a podiatrist can begin treating your ailment immediately while you’re away from home. You can find an APMA podiatrist in your travel area by calling **1-800-FOOTCARE** or by logging on to **www.apma.org**.
8. In case of minor foot problems, be prepared with the following on-the-go foot gear:

- Flip flops – for the pool, spa, hotel room, and airport security check points
- Sterile bandages – for covering minor cuts and scrapes on the foot
- Antibiotic cream – to treat any skin injury
- Emollient-enriched cream – to hydrate feet
- Blister pads or moleskin – to protect against blisters
- Motrin or Advil (anti-inflammatory) – to ease tired, swollen feet
- Toenail clippers – to keep toenails neatly trimmed
- Emery board – to smooth rough edges or broken nails
- Pumice stone – to soften callused skin
- Sunscreen – to protect against the scorching sun
- Aloe vera or Silvadene cream – to relieve sunburns

To speak with a podiatrist from the APMA or for more information contact:

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