

# Summer Foot Care

Summertime is here and so are sunny days spent splashing in pools and relaxing on the beach. As many vacationers know, summer can cause some extra wear and tear on the body. Educated consumers usually protect themselves by purchasing sunscreen, lip protectants, and sunglasses. But many will forget to look after two of the most important and neglected parts of the body -- the feet.

The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) offers the following key tips on how to protect yourself, especially your feet, from salt water, sand, and other summer scares:

1. Remember to apply sunscreen to feet, especially the tops and fronts of ankles. Don't forget to reapply if you're in the water!
2. When out of the water, wash and dry feet thoroughly, especially between the toes, and apply a topical anti-fungal medication on any cracked or itchy skin. Clean, dry feet resist disease.
3. Pass up sharing towels to avoid developing athlete's foot and other diseases that can easily be spread.
4. Take special care of toenails, which are especially vulnerable around damp areas. Injury to the nail bed may make it more susceptible to infection so see your podiatrist at first sign of discoloration or infection.
5. To avoid toe and ankle injuries, wear shoes that are specific to the activity or sport you're participating in. Never play Frisbee in sandals and be sure to wear boots when working outside and mowing the lawn.
6. Give yourself plenty of time to break in new shoes before going on trips where you'll be doing lots of walking. And when trying on new shoes, make sure you have on the same socks you plan on wearing with them.
7. When in the ocean, be cautious of jellyfish that often bite at feet and ankles and sharp coral that can cut the undersides of feet. Keeping sandals or water shoes on at all times is a good idea to prevent stings, cuts, and other injuries.
8. Watch out for prickly sea urchin spines when taking walks on the beach. Avoid walking barefoot; wear an old pair of running shoes or flip-flops to protect yourself from jagged rocks, shells, spines, and debris that could float ashore.
9. And most importantly, swim, walk, and enjoy the summer!! Walking is the best form of exercise for your feet and swimming is a great alternative for those suffering from tendinitis and plantar fasciitis, which can make other types of exercise painful.

So before heading to the beach or going on vacation, be sure to lather up with sunscreen and check up on your feet. Summertime activities can be especially harmful and any foot problems should be evaluated and treated by your podiatrist. For more information on foot health, visit the APMA's Web site at [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org) or call 1-800-FOOTCARE to request a free brochure.



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