

FOOTNOTES 2005

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR SUMMER 2005

When Summer Fun Turns to Summer Pain...

Summer finds most of us spending more time in outdoor pursuits. We engage in recreational sports such as tennis and golf. Homeowners can be seen sprucing up their yards and gardens. We're on vacation, exploring national parks or historic sites. The whole family enjoys the beach, with some playing volleyball and others just jogging along the shoreline.

It takes just one wrong step, however, for summer fun to turn into summer pain in the form of an ankle sprain or fracture. Walking, running and playing on uneven surfaces such as hiking trails, beaches and even grassy lawns leaves us susceptible to ankle trauma. Lightweight, unsupportive summer footwear such as sandals or slides compounds the problem, making it difficult for us to regain our balance when the going gets bumpy.

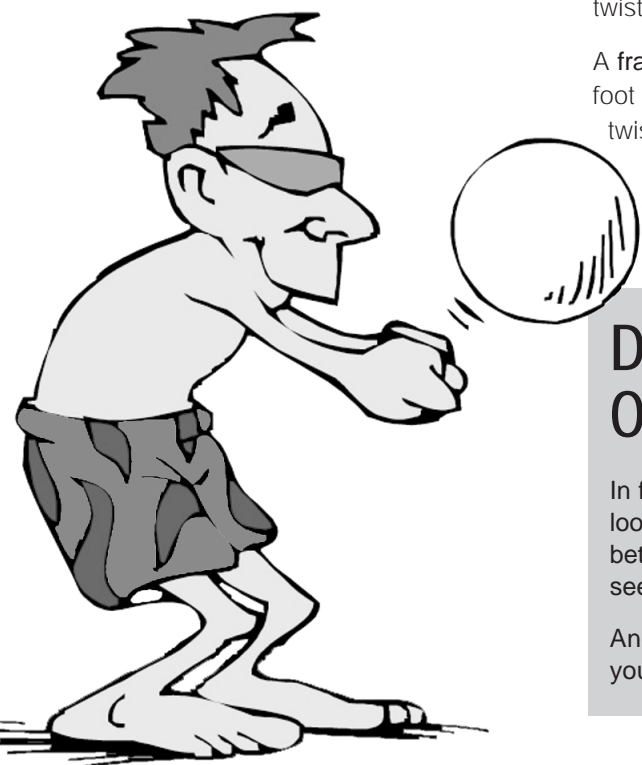
Sprains are one of the most common ankle injuries. But how do we know whether that pain is a fracture or a sprain? And what should we do when we or a family member injures an ankle?

An **ankle sprain** is an injury to one or more of the ligaments in the ankle. These ligaments are like rubber bands that stabilize the ankle and limit its side-to-side motion. When these ligaments are stretched or torn, which can occur when the ankle is suddenly twisted for example, a sprain results.

A **fracture** can also occur when the foot is rolled under and the ankle is twisted. But in this case, one or more bones may break, or the ligament actually pulls a piece of bone off when it tears.

What should you do if you or a family member has sprained or fractured an ankle?

1. **Stay off of it!** Walking with a sprain or fracture could cause further damage.
2. **Ice it.** A bag of frozen vegetables wrapped in a light towel makes a good ice pack, which should be applied not more than 20 minutes each hour.
3. **Wrap it.** A loosely-applied elastic bandage can help stabilize the ankle and reduce swelling.
4. **Elevate it.** Lie with the leg on a pillow so that the ankle is above the level of the heart. This will help with pain and swelling.
5. **Call our office.** Prompt diagnosis and treatment are important to a successful recovery. ☛



Did You Know That Skin Cancer Can Occur on Feet?

In fact, melanoma of the foot is particularly fatal because people rarely think to look for it there. So, check your feet regularly for suspicious spots on the soles, between the toes, or under the toenails. Call our office for an appointment if you see anything questionable.

And, prevent skin cancer by always using sun block... even on the soles of your feet! ☛

Keep Your Kids' Feet Safe This Summer

School's out, and kids are primed for summer fun. A few precautions can keep their feet healthy throughout the warm months of bare feet and sandals.

Practice lawnmower safety. A lawnmower's blades produce three times the kinetic energy of a .357 handgun. Yet parents will mow a lawn with little ones nearby, and older children are often recruited for mowing duty. Follow these tips to keep your children's feet (and yours) safe this summer:

- Don't mow a lawn that's wet.
- Wear heavy shoes or work boots.
- Mow across slopes, not up and down.
- Never pull a running mower backward.
- Keep the clip bag attached to prevent projectile injuries.
- Keep children away from the mower.

Get puncture wounds professionally treated. Any time a foot is punctured by a foreign object such as a piece of glass or a nail, it must be treated by a doctor. Not only can some of the foreign body, or dirt that was on it, stay in the wound, but pieces of skin or sock can be

embedded and cause a serious infection. Call our office for an appointment to have the wound thoroughly cleaned within 24 hours of the injury.

Limit wearing of flip-flop sandals. Flip-flops are no longer just a sandal for wearing on the beach or at the pool. Children and teens have taken to wearing them all day... every day... and their feet are shouting "help!" Although flip-flops come in every color and design imaginable, they have no arch support and offer no stability for the foot. This causes abnormal strain on the band of tissue that extends from the heel to the base of the toes and results in a condition known as "plantar fasciitis" or heel pain.

Flip-flops don't have to be banned entirely, but should be worn only some of the time. Supportive athletic shoes or sport sandals as the mainstay of the summer footwear menu will go a long way toward keeping your kids' feet healthy and pain free all season long. 🐾

