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Weekend Doctor

By **DR. THOMAS F. VAIL**

There are several common foot ailments that sports enthusiasts, and others, should watch for.

With more than 250,000 sweat glands in the foot, it's no surprise that foot odor can affect anyone.

Daily hygiene, in addition to the regular changing of socks and shoes, are the best ways to control foot sweat and odor.

Runners should avoid wearing cotton socks and running without socks. Foot powders, aerosols, antiperspirants and vinegar soaks can be helpful in preventing and treating foot odor.

Blisters, corns and calluses can cause problems, but are usually easy to treat.

Never pop blisters unless they are larger than a quarter, painful or swollen.

Use a sterile instrument to lance the corner, leaving the top as a natural, biological dressing. Wash, apply antibiotic ointment and cover with a bandage.

Corns and calluses are caused by repeated friction and should be treated by aseptically trimming the dead skin and eliminating the underlying cause.

Athlete's foot is a fungal skin disorder that causes dry, cracking skin between the toes, itching, inflammation and blisters.

Athlete's foot can be prevented and controlled by:

- washing the feet regularly
- carefully drying between the toes
- switching running shoes every other day to allow them to dry
- wearing socks made with synthetic material instead of cotton
- applying over-the-counter ointments

Ingrown toenails can cause inflammation and possible infection. They are usually treated by cutting the corner of the nail with sterile clippers.

Black toenails happen when trauma causes a blood blister to form under the nail. In this case, it's best to let the nail fall off by itself.

Fungal toenails are yellow, brown or black, and are sometimes irregularly shaped and thick. They are best treated with oral anti-fungal medications that a physician can prescribe.

If you have questions about your feet, whether you're an athlete or not, talk to your podiatrist.



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