

# Weekend Doctor

By **DR. THOMAS F. VAIL**

Don't let sore, achy feet ruin your holiday season. Here are five tips for healthy holiday feet.

**If the shoe fits, wear it.**

When hitting the dance floor or the shopping malls during the holiday season, don't compromise comfort and safety when picking the right shoes to wear.

Narrow shoes, overly high high heels or shoes that aren't worn very often can irritate feet and lead to blisters, calluses, swelling and even severe ankle injuries.

To ward off problems, choose a shoe that has a low heel and fits your foot in length, width and depth while you are standing.

Remember my three P's of shoe selection: Be proactive, protective and preventive with your selection of appropriate shoes for the occasion.

**Don't overindulge in holiday cheer.**

Did you know your feet can feel the effects of too much holiday cheer?

Certain foods and beverages high in purines, such as shellfish, red meat, red wine and beer can trigger extremely painful gout attacks, a condition when uric acid builds up and crystallizes in and around your joints.

Oftentimes, it's the big toe that is affected first since the toe is the coolest part of the body and uric acid is sensitive to temperature changes.

**Be pedicure-safety conscious.**

Before you head for your holiday pedicure, remember nail salons can be a breeding ground for bacteria.

To reduce your risk of infection, choose a salon that follows proper sanitation practices. Consider purchasing your own pedicure instruments to bring along to your appointment.

**Watch for ice and snow.**

Holiday winter wonderlands can be beautiful and dangerous.

Use caution when traveling outdoors. Watch for ice or snow patches along your trail.

The ankle joint can be more vulnerable to serious injury from falling on ice.

Ice accelerates the fall and often causes more severe trauma, because the foot can move in any direction after it slips.

Consider purchasing traction grips for your shoes. You can find these at sporting goods stores and they can be used on dress or athletic shoes.

If you do experience a fall, take a break from activities until you can be seen by a foot and ankle surgeon.

Use R.I.C.E. therapy (rest, ice, compression and elevation) to help reduce the pain and control swelling around the injury.

**"Listen" to your feet.**

Don't let foot pain ruin your holiday fun; inspect your feet regularly for any evidence of ingrown toenails, bruising, swelling, blisters, dry skin or calluses.

If you notice any pain, swelling or signs of problems, make an appointment with your foot and ankle surgeon.

Often, especially for diabetics, what may seem like a simple issue can turn into a larger problem if medical care is delayed.

If you are suffering from foot pain or have concerns about your foot health, call your podiatrist for an evaluation.



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