



For Immediate Release

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April 24, 2019

ARTHRITIS AND YOUR FEET

May is National Arthritis Awareness Month

Lansing, Mich. - Arthritis is an inflammation and swelling of the cartilage and lining of the joints, generally accompanied by an increase in the fluid in the joints. It is a disabling and occasionally crippling disease afflicting over 50 million Americans. In some forms, it appears to be hereditary. Although the prevalence of arthritis increases with age, all people from infancy to middle age are potential victims. People over 50 are the primary targets. The month of May has been set aside as National Arthritis Awareness Month. It is a time to spread the message about prevention methods and treatment of arthritis. The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has information to help understand the symptoms and treatments of arthritic feet.

“There is usually no need to endure years of painful ambulation because of arthritic feet,” said Dr. Jodie Sengstock, MPMA director of professional relations. “Most conditions can be diagnosed and treated either conservatively or surgically by a podiatrist.”

Because each foot has 33 joints that can be afflicted - and there is no way to avoid the tremendous weight-bearing load on the feet - feet are very susceptible to arthritis. Arthritic feet can result in loss of mobility and independence. However, early diagnosis and proper medical care can limit or slow the damage.

Symptoms of arthritis in the foot and ankle include:

- Early morning stiffness.
- Limitation in motion of joint.
- Recurring pain or tenderness in any joint.
- Redness or heat in a joint.
- Skin changes, including rashes and growths.
- Swelling in one or more joints.

Forms of Arthritis

Osteoarthritis is the most common form of arthritis. It is frequently called *degenerative joint disease* or *wear and tear arthritis*. Aging usually brings on a breakdown in cartilage, and pain gets progressively more severe. Dull, throbbing nighttime pain is characteristic, and may be accompanied by muscle weakness or deterioration. Many of these symptoms can be relieved with rest. Overweight people are particularly susceptible to osteoarthritis. The additional weight contributes to the deterioration of cartilage and the development of bone spurs.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a major crippling disorder and the most serious form of arthritis. It is a complex, chronic inflammatory group of diseases, often affecting more than a dozen smaller joints during its course. In the foot, it frequently affects both ankles and toes.

Posttraumatic arthritis can develop after an injury to the foot or ankle. Dislocations and fractures—particularly those that damage the joint surface—are the most common injuries that lead to posttraumatic arthritis. Like osteoarthritis, posttraumatic arthritis causes the cartilage between the joints to wear away. It can develop many years after the initial injury.

Arthritis of the foot and ankle can be treated in many ways, including:

- Physical therapy and exercise.
- Anti-inflammatory medication and/or steroid injections into the affected joint.
- Orthotics or specially prescribed shoes.
- Joint replacement.

To find an MPMA podiatrist near you, visit www.mpma.org.

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About the MPMA:

The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has been dedicated to serving and protecting the public's podiatric health and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members for over 100 years. The four main objectives of the organization are: to improve the quality of foot care; to promote the importance of foot health among the general public and health care professionals throughout the state; to increase awareness of the art and science of podiatric medicine and surgery; and to provide continuing medical education to podiatrists. www.mpma.org

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