



In This Issue...

- Healthy Heart Healthy Sole
- Taking Care of Toe Deformities
- Recipe of the Month: Rhubarb Crumble

Healthy Heart Healthy Sole



February is American Heart Month

February is American Heart Month. While you may think that your heart is pretty far from your feet, it plays a key role in your podiatric health. When conditions such as peripheral arterial disease or high blood pressure result in decreased circulation, your feet suffer more than other parts of the body because the blood travels the farthest distance to get to them. Poor circulation can prevent wounds from healing properly and make infections more likely. Heart disease can increase the risk of podiatric disorders and complications. So, try the tips below to improve the health of your heart—and your feet!

- **Swear off smoking.** Smokers are at an increased risk for heart disease. In addition, nicotine reduces blood flow—something your feet definitely do not benefit from!
- **Modify your diet.** What you eat has a significant impact on your heart health. It's important to avoid being overweight, limit fat intake, and control cholesterol. Instead of a restrictive diet you're not likely to follow, aim to make small but significant changes. Consider: not having seconds, substituting fruit for cookies or seltzer for sugary sodas, or having a salad before dinner.
- **Get moving.** Strive for 30 minutes of exercise daily. Be creative. If you can't make it to the gym or an exercise class every day, get off the bus a stop earlier, dance with your kids, or take the stairs instead of the elevator. Stay motivated by finding an exercise partner and reward yourself when you reach a fitness goal.
- **Keep current with medical checkups.** High blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes are all associated with a greater chance of developing heart disease. Don't skip your annual physical; manage all chronic conditions according to your physician's instructions.
- **Get the big 8.** That's hours of sleep. Studies show that people who get less than 7 hours consistently are more likely to have heart trouble (as well as other health problems).
- **Stay calm.** Stress is another trigger for heart disease. Take time to stay connected to friends and family and develop strategies to deal with stress before it happens. Find what helps you take the focus off stress: volunteering, working out, or inspirational reading are just a few options to try.

Be good to your heart, and you'll be helping your feet at the same time.

Taking Care of Toe Deformities



Toe deformities such as bunions, hammertoes, and claw toes are not only unsightly; they can become quite debilitating if left untreated. These conditions are progressive, and although they may happen slowly or quickly, they worsen over time.

Why Deformities Happen

In most cases, toe deformities have two components: a biomechanical defect such as a muscle/tendon imbalance or other structural problem and poor footwear choices. So, while the tendency for a toe deformity may exist in a patient, wearing shoes that are too small, squeezing the toes together, or forcing them forward, exacerbates the condition and may speed its progression.

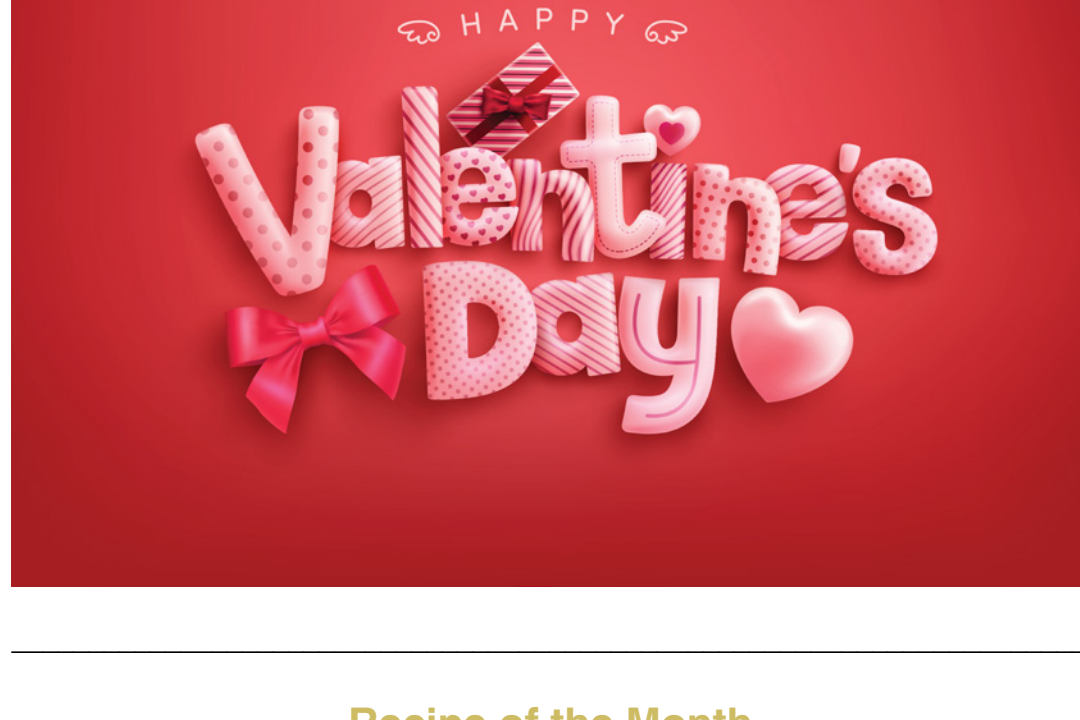
Treatment Options

Too often, patients don't bring the problem of a toe deformity to the podiatrist until it has reached an advanced stage. By that time, the deformity is severe enough to make it hard to wear shoes and also be very painful. Secondary conditions such as corns and calluses may also have formed, and walking can be difficult. Like most podiatric disorders, toe deformities are best addressed in their earliest stages when the podiatrist has more treatment choices and can work to slow the condition's progression. The foot doctor will examine your toe and foot and may take x-rays or other imaging studies to use as a baseline to monitor the toe over time. The current condition of the toe will determine treatment choices. Some options include:

- **Footwear modifications**—properly fitted shoes made of flexible materials with roomy toe boxes will relieve pain and slow down the progression of the deformity.
- **Orthotic devices**—these can be employed to change the position of the foot and relieve stress in vulnerable areas.
- **Padding/Splints**—if corns or calluses have formed, padding or splints may be recommended to prevent friction with footwear and reduce pain.
- **Pain medications**—if the toe joint is inflamed, the podiatrist may prescribe oral medication or steroid injections for relief.

Ultimately, surgery is the only way to correct a deformed toe permanently. Appropriately managed, however, surgery can be delayed for a time.

If you notice one of your toes appears to be moving out of place or bending in an unnatural way, make an appointment to get it evaluated with your podiatrist as soon as possible.



Recipe of the Month Rhubarb Crumble



Easy to prepare recipe for rhubarb lovers everywhere!

Prepare Crumbles:

Combine 1 cup flour, 1/3 cup oats, 3/4 cup sugar, and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Stir in 6 tablespoons of melted butter and 1/2 cup of chopped hazelnuts. Squeeze into large crumbles and place in the freezer.

Prepare Filling:

Toss 2 pounds chopped rhubarb, 1/3 cup sugar, 1/4 cup flour, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1/2 teaspoon orange zest, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in an 8-by-8-inch glass or ceramic baking dish. Scatter the crumble on top and bake in a preheated 375 degrees F oven until golden and bubbly, 45 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes.

Serve with whipped cream.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Foodnetwork.com



February Fun Fact - In Honor of "President's Day" – Mount Rushmore

- The carving of Mount Rushmore took place between 1927 and 1941.
- The Mount Rushmore construction crew apparently had their own baseball team, and they used to play against other teams from the region.
- Thomas Jefferson's face was originally going to be positioned to the right of Washington, but he was moved to Washington's left when the first area of granite was found to be unstable.

February Special Days - Mark Your Calendar!

- February 1 - National Dark Chocolate Day
- February 2 - Groundhog Day
- February 3 - National Carrot Cake Day
- February 4 - World Cancer Day
- February 5 - World Nutella Day
- February 14 - Valentine's Day
- February 27 - National Polar Bear Day

Trivia

Socrates said, "When our feet hurt..."

- We should wear cushions in our shoes
- We need to work laying down
- We hurt all over
- We should go without shoes

Answer: C

Meet Our Doctors



Lori K. Paragas, DPM, FACFAS



Kristina Bystrak, DPM, AACFAS

Our Office and Hours:

Hamden, CT Podiatrist
CT Family Foot Care and Surgery
1952 Whitney Ave., 3rd Floor
Hamden, CT 06517
Tel: (203) 288-0129

Office Hours:

- Monday : 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Tuesday : 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Wednesday : 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Thursday : 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Friday : 9:00am to 5:00pm
- Saturday : Closed
- Sunday : Closed

www.ctfamilyfoot.com

Disclaimer: Content of this newsletter may not be used or reproduced without written permission of the author. This newsletter is not intended to replace the services of a doctor. No expressed or implied guarantees have been made or are made by the author or publisher. Information in this newsletter is for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.