

# Foot Notes

Brought to you by Dr. Powers

News and Updates **January 2018**



## When does a sprain need attention?

We've all been there. You slip or bring your foot down on an uneven surface, and suddenly you have a wrenching pain in your ankle.

Sprains happen, and most of the time they are minor injuries that will recover with some rest. It is always wise to at least contact your podiatrist if you or a loved one has suffered an ankle sprain, just in case trouble develops. But what are the signs that you should be seeking medical attention sooner than later?

Seek urgent care if you experience:

- Swelling or bruising around the ankle
- An inability to stand or walk
- General instability in the ankle
- Increased pain that does not subside soon after the sprain, and sometimes becomes worse

There are two big reasons why severe sprains should be examined and treated promptly. First, it's best to ensure that the sprain is not actually a broken bone, as symptoms of both can be similar. Second, the more severe a sprain, the more likely it could increase the risk of sprains or chronic pain in the future if not treated properly.

Regardless of the signs, you should never be afraid to contact your podiatrist after an ankle sprain, no matter the severity. When it comes to risking the strength, comfort, and stability of your ankles, it's always best to be safe than sorry!

### Meet the Doctor

**Kevin Powers, DPM**



Kevin Powers has been helping people with foot and ankle pain for 25 years. He is considered the top expert in Southern Indiana, as his opinion is highly valued by the doctors who refer patients from the specialties of internal medicine, pain management, emergency room doctors, nurse practitioners, family practice, OB/GYN, orthopedic surgeons, and general surgeons.



American Board  
of Foot and  
Ankle Surgery



Association of  
Extremity  
Nerve Surgeons





# Helping Foot Pain Get Off Your Nerves

When it comes to nerve damage and pain, the feet are a particularly susceptible area. The feet lie far from the blood pumping center of the heart, meaning it takes extra effort to provide nourishment via the blood. Conditions such as diabetes or vascular disease, or side effects from drugs and treatments may make it even more difficult to provide blood to the feet.

Complications can lead to the nerves becoming damaged over time, which can then result in tingling, burning pain as the nerves misfire. Nerve pain can become a part of life, but not to worry there are ways to manage the pain. The following tips can help provide more comfort:

- **Get walking.** Exercise promotes blood flow to needy nerves and can also release natural endorphins for lessening pain. Starting with a daily walk and gradually increasing the pace and distance within your comfort zone can have long-lasting positive effects.
- **Soak.** Warm water temporarily increases blood flow to the legs and reduces stress. A warm bath could be a ticket to reduced nerve pain.
- **Get spicy.** Capsaicin (the stuff that makes chilies hot) in cream form can potentially reduce nerve pain over time. However, the sensation of applying it can be painful in itself for some people, so don't continue if you can't stand it!



**“The podiatrist’s is right over there  
... in the foothills.”**

There are more methods of nerve pain management that may work for you, as well as treatments that may improve nerve health and help reduce pain even further. Our office would be happy to discuss them with you!

## Mark Your Calendars

- January 2** National Personal Trainer Awareness Day – As if we needed the reminder.
- January 5** National Bird Day – Have you refilled your birdfeeder recently?
- January 8** National Winter Skin Relief Day – Don't forget your feet!
- January 11** National Step in the Puddle and Splash Your Friends Day – Why is this in winter?!
- January 15** National Hat Day – We tip ours to you!
- January 21** Squirrel Appreciation Day – Even if they drive you nuts.
- January 28** Data Privacy Day – When's the last time you updated your password?
- January 29** National Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day – Relieve some stress!



# How to Increase Activity Around the Home

Some places are prone to cabin fever in the winter, but anyone can find themselves just sitting around the home at times no matter the climate. If you are looking to increase your physical activity but don't necessarily have the time to get out there, why not consider customizing your in-home errands a bit?

- **Set time limits to up intensity.** Setting a time limit to finish the dishes or vacuum the living room can put some added spring in your errands. It doesn't have to be a stopwatch setting the pace; put on some music and finish by a certain number of songs!
- **Clean more often.** We're certainly not saying you don't keep up with the dusting, but tidying up can turn into quite a workout—especially with all the lifting, bending and stretching that can be involved.
- **Make the most of TV time.** Just because you're watching TV doesn't mean you have to be inactive. Put a treadmill or bike in view of the screen, or take commercial breaks to do some jumping jacks or push-ups (within your physical limits and comfort zone, of course).

As with any change in activity, be sure to consult with a medical professional before making any big changes. Even so, you might be surprised at what even just a little added movement per day can do for your health and mood.



## Soup's On in January!

January is Soup Month, so why not try a new recipe and curl up with a bowl of delicious warmth?

### Creamy Broccoli and Spinach Soup

#### Ingredients

- 2 leeks, chopped
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter
- kosher salt and black pepper
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 bunch broccoli, chopped
- 1 small russet potato, peeled and chopped
- 5 oz. spinach
- sour cream (or Greek yogurt)

#### Preparation

In a large pot over medium heat, cook the leeks in the butter with  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp salt and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp pepper, 4 to 6 minutes until soft.

Add vegetable broth, potato, and broccoli. Simmer 18-22 minutes until tender.

Stir in the spinach until it is wilted. Transfer everything to a blender and puree until smooth. Top with sour cream/Greek yogurt and pepper to taste.



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### When Does a Sprain Need Attention?



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# Every Step You Take: Caring for Aging Feet

We know, we know—when you were a kid, you had to walk four miles to school, uphill, in a snowstorm, right? Well, over the years, that's a lot of pounding you put on your feet. Along with aging comes a lot of wear and tear, and your feet can take the brunt of it. If you've gone from "kicking the can" to kicking a soccer ball around with your grandkids, your feet have been around the block, so to speak, which makes them more and more vulnerable to problems. That is why it's so important to practice good foot care, especially as you age. There are steps you can take to avoid common conditions that often occur over time, such as bad circulation, ingrown toenails, fungal infections, and corns and calluses, just to name a few.

The best thing you can do is to inspect your feet regularly. Look for any cuts or blisters that could become infected. This is especially important if you have diabetes, since even the tiniest of infections can snowball into serious complications. Also, make sure you're wearing shoes that fit you well—this is essential! Shoes that are too tight can cause a host of problems, including bunions, hammertoes, nerve damage, and more. Keeping up with good hygiene is also a must. Be sure to clean and dry your feet thoroughly. Smooth rough patches with pumice stone, and moisturize dry skin to keep it from cracking. Always trim your nails straight across and not too short. It's a good idea to elevate your feet while you sit as well, to encourage good circulation. Finally, staying active can do wonders for the health of your feet and your whole body. So keep it moving!

For more information on caring for aging feet, just ask the experts in our office.