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Lepow
Foot & Ankle Specialists

*Diplomates, American Board of Podiatric Surgery

Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates has four locations throughout Greater Houston, and our office hours are 8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Medical Center
St. Luke's Medical Tower
6624 Fannin, Suite 1690
Houston, Texas 77030
(713) 790-0530

Downtown
Medical Place One Building
1315 St. Joseph Parkway
Suite 930
Houston, Texas 77002
(713) 951-5000

Kingwood
Diagnostic Affiliates Building
22751 Professional Drive
Suite 240
Kingwood, Texas 77339
(281) 348-3338

Southwest
Memorial Hermann
Southwest Professional Building 1
7777 SW Freeway #322
Houston, Texas 77074
(713) 772-9700

Thank you for all your referrals. We appreciate them!

Enjoy summer and take care of your feet!

Warmer months are upon us and the doctors at ***Lepow Foot & Ankle Specialists*** want to ensure that all of our friends in the community step out on the right foot and enjoy this time of the year pain and problem free. On the list of the many items necessary to prepare is a new pair of sandals or shoes. Purchasing new shoes, however, doesn't come without some unwanted issues. One of the most common foot ailments is the formation of painful blisters. Blisters are lesions that occur when a shoe rubs against the skin until it balloons out, separating the epidermis from the dermis, and fills with fluid. One way to prevent these issues is to purchase shoes that are comfortable when you buy them and don't need to be "broken in." Look for shoes that are made with soft fabrics and leathers, and try to wear them at home for an hour or so before wearing outside to ensure a pain-free fit. Moleskin can be used at times and applied to painful areas on the foot or in the shoe to prevent friction.

Flip-flop use dramatically increases this time of year and unfortunately leads to many unwanted foot conditions that could put a damper on your warm-weather plans. Overuse and excessive walking in these types of shoes can lead to heel pain (plantar fasciitis), stress fractures, and tendonitis. Flip-flops are not designed for extended hours of use due to their lack of structure and stability. If you choose to wear them for longer periods of time, be sure to look for those that have a thicker sole with a built-in arch support. Also, the more straps the better, as they can help to reduce stress placed on the toes to grip the flip-flop so it does not slip off of your foot while walking. You should also not be able to bend the flip-flop in half. This is a good indicator that the shoe may not provide adequate structural support to the foot.

Wearing open-backed shoes allows prolonged air exposure to the skin. This coupled with the spreading of the fat pad of the heel can lead to cracking of the skin. Deeper cracks or fissures can form to the point where bleeding occurs. If this happens it is advised to clean the area with warm soap and water, apply a topical antibiotic with a band-aid, and seek care from a medical professional if the problem continues. For those less severe cracks, one should utilize an exfoliating moisturizer daily along with a pumice stone once or twice a week while in the shower. Dry, cracked skin can also signal underlying medical conditions such as fungus, thyroid dysfunction, or diabetes.

Another foot concern during the warmer months is increased moisture and odor of the foot. For some, hot temperatures lead to sweaty feet, and all that additional moisture can cause an increased risk for developing an infection. Wearing socks designed to wick away excess moisture and changing damp socks as soon as possible can help to reduce this risk. Also, wearing lighter-color shoes and ones that provide ventilation may help reduce warmth and moisture.

Walking barefoot might feel liberating, but it can lead to exposure to unwanted germs and put you at an increased risk of contracting fungus (athlete's foot), a virus (warts), or a bacterial skin infection. All of these conditions thrive in warm, moist environments and can pose a potential serious health risk to those who are not cautious. Going shoeless can also lead to an increased risk of foreign bodies like stepping on glass or a splinter, resulting in a visit to the ER or your local doctor's office.

While many of the conditions mentioned above may sound somewhat unpleasant, the doctors at ***Lepow Foot & Ankle Specialists*** want to ensure that you have the necessary tools to be able to select the proper shoe gear and enjoy your activities, while limiting your risk for developing a problem.

Cause and effect of peripheral neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathy (PN) is the term describing damage to nerves that affect the hands and feet. PN symptoms can vary from person to person. Some experience tingling, burning, a pins-and-needles feeling, or shooting pain. Sometimes there's a complete absence of sensation, rendering a person unable to feel pain, or detect changes in pressure or temperature. Reduced reflex reaction and weakness may result as well.

The most common cause of PN is diabetes. According to the American Diabetes Association, 60–70 percent of diabetics will develop PN at some point. Other culprits include various medications, injury, neurological disorders, alcoholism, arthritis, heredity, and advancing age.

When a person has PN and greatly diminished sensation in their feet, he/she may not even realize they've incurred an injury. A seemingly minor blister or scrape can quickly escalate into a full-blown wound problem. Infections can be life-threatening, and amputation may become necessary. Daily foot inspections are critical. If anything looks abnormal, no matter how slight, a call to a podiatrist is vital.

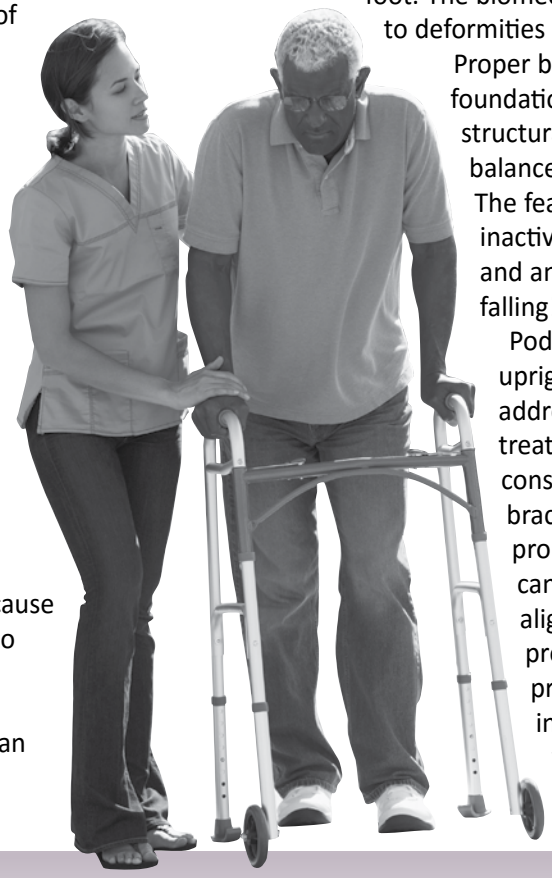
A healthy diet, exercise, medication, eliminating alcohol intake and/or exposure to toxins, and proper treatment of disorders that cause PN are key to managing it. Diabetics also need to keep their blood-sugar levels under control to prevent it or slow its advance.

The best move anyone with diabetes or PN can make is including us on their healthcare team. Contact our office today.

The elderly, falls, and podiatric care

Each year, about one in three older Americans suffer a fall. Up to 10 percent of falls lead to nasty cuts, head trauma, and broken bones, including potentially disabling and life-threatening hip fractures. In recent years, numerous studies have cited poor foot and ankle health as a major risk factor for falls among the elderly.

Aging takes its toll on feet and ankles. Muscle tissue thins out; long nerves diminish in function, leading to loss of sensation; and changes in fat-pad tissue compromise its cushioning ability. In addition, arches fall, flattening out the foot. The biomechanics of the foot may change due to deformities (e.g., claw foot and bunions).



Proper balance depends on a solid foundation—the feet and ankles. When pain, structural abnormalities, and injury disrupt balance, falls are right around the corner. The fear of falling may also lead to inactivity and further deterioration in foot and ankle health—elevating the chance of falling!

Podiatric care can help keep seniors upright. Structural problems can be addressed; pain and injury can be treated. Treatment may range from conservative measures such as orthotics, bracing, ankle-foot exercises, and properly-fitting shoes to surgery, which can alleviate discomfort, restore alignment and stability, redistribute pressure, and/or enable the feet to provide the brain with more sensory input. Call for an appointment for yourself or a loved one today… preferably *before* a fall occurs.

The lowdown on toenail fungus

An estimated 55 million Americans deal with toenail fungus (onychomycosis) to some degree, but only a fraction of them do anything about it.

If toenail fungus invades the nail bed, it will contentedly feast on keratin, a protein that's part of the nail. As the fungus devours and digests the keratin, the nail becomes discolored and thickened. If it isn't treated, it can eventually destroy the nail, spread to other nails, and create a foul odor. Toenail fungus is typically painless, although advanced cases might prove otherwise and make it difficult to walk comfortably. It will *not* go away on its own and is tough to kill.

Cracking a nail or cutting nails too short can provide the fungus with a direct pathway to the nail bed. The fungus is prevalent in warm, moist areas—shared showers, locker rooms, saunas, poolside, inside footwear, and pedicure salons that don't follow proper sterilization procedures. It's the same fungus that produces athlete's foot and can spread from skin to nail.

The sooner toenail fungus is treated, the easier it is to eliminate. Topical applications, oral medications, and laser treatment are weapons at our disposal. Treatments may be ongoing, and the healed nail(s) will take six months to a year or more to grow out—there is no quick fix. Schedule an appointment with our office. Together, we can determine the best course of action for your circumstances.

Heel bone fractures are serious business

Heel bone (calcaneus) fractures typically occur as a result of high-energy collisions, such as an auto accident or a fall from height. Outward signs include pain, bruising, swelling, inability to put weight on the heel, and heel deformity. X-rays and CT scans are used to determine the type and extent of injury.

For calcaneus fractures that are displaced—i.e., the two ends of the broken bone are no longer in alignment—surgery is the best method for restoring function and minimizing chronic pain. Diabetics, those with poor circulation, and the elderly might not be good candidates for surgery due to issues with healing, elevated risk of infection, and difficulty with postsurgical rehab. Surgery may be delayed until swelling subsides, unless bone has broken through the skin surface ("open" fracture), exposing the fracture site to the environment. These injuries require immediate surgery.

Open reduction and internal fixation is the most common type of surgery for displaced calcaneus fractures and involves an L-shaped incision on the outside of the heel. The overlying sural nerve and tendons are moved aside, the fracture fragments are placed back into alignment, and a plate and/or screws are inserted to keep things in proper position.

The recovery period for calcaneus surgery can be lengthy, ranging anywhere from four months to two years. Patients should be forewarned that even if everything goes as planned, there may be a loss in range of motion, residual pain or stiffness after healing, and a higher risk for arthritis.

Calcaneus fractures are serious and potentially life-changing. Prompt podiatric attention is imperative.

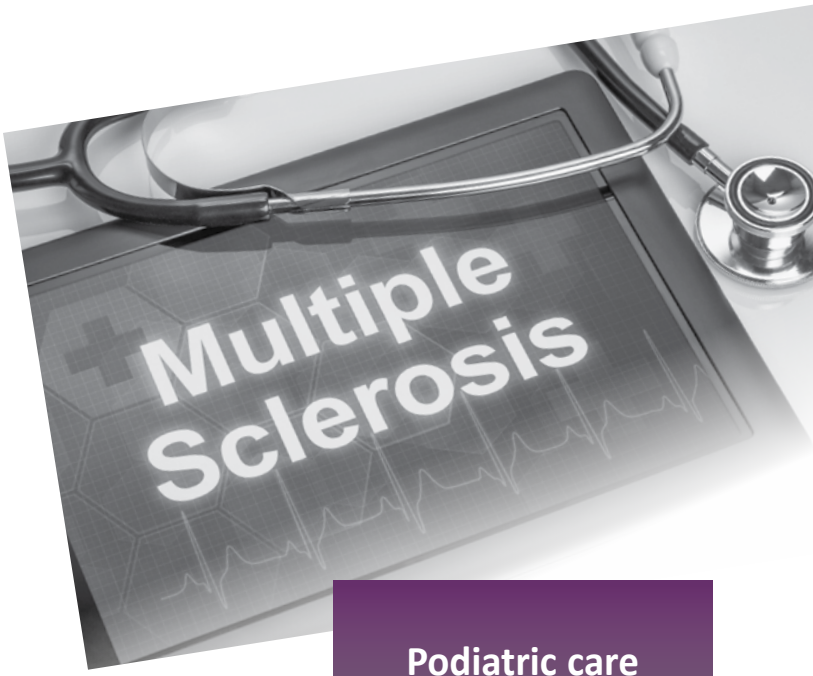
Podiatric care can help MS patients

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues. In the case of MS, the immune system targets the myelin sheath that protects nerve fibers in the brain and spinal cord. Myelin also assists the nerves in relaying messages from the brain and spinal cord to other parts of the body, and vice versa. When the myelin sheath becomes scarred, numerous symptoms may appear, including those that affect the feet and ankles.

Muscle control in the feet and ankles may be compromised. When messages from the brain controlling motion are interfered with, reflexes can become excessively responsive, leading to spasticity. Weakness will also become an issue for many MS sufferers. Information sent from the feet and ankles to the brain concerning balance, coordination, and body positioning (proprioception) may be disrupted. Sensation in the feet may be affected as well in the form of tingling, numbness, or itchiness.

Podiatric care can be helpful in combating the effects of MS. Stretching, physical therapy, and bracing in early stages of MS, when deformities have not become rigid, can be effective. In more advanced situations, foot surgery may be beneficial to release rigid deformities (e.g., claw foot).

Muscle weakness due to MS may lead to foot drop, which causes the foot to drag at the point that it would normally lift up during walking. A podiatrist-prescribed ankle-foot orthosis may be a desired treatment.



Podiatric care can be helpful in combating the effects of MS.

Loss of sensation in the foot (similar to that of peripheral neuropathy) will require daily foot inspections by the patient and regular podiatric evaluation as well.

If you or someone you know suffers from MS, foot and ankle health may eventually be affected, which will have an impact on walking. Be proactive. Contact our office and make us part of your healthcare team.

From the offices of
Lepow Foot & Ankle Specialists

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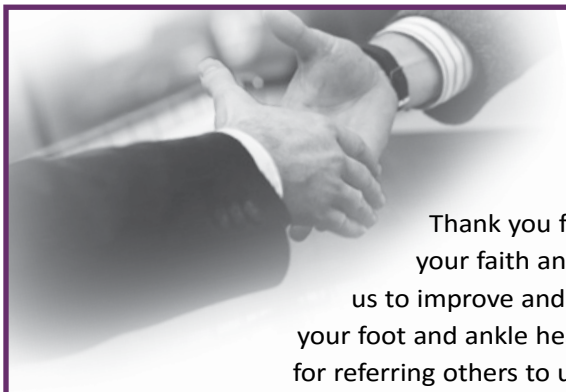
Days & Hours

Mon.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Tues.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Wed.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Thurs.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Fri.	8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.



Thank you for putting your faith and trust in us to improve and maintain your foot and ankle health, and for referring others to us.

Your referrals are indeed a high compliment and something we take very seriously. It's the prime reason we are able to grow.

"Commitment to the health of our patients and community is the cornerstone of our medical practice. We believe that the care and concern for others enhances the quality of life for everyone."

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6624 Fannin, Suite 1690
Houston, TX 77030

Please visit our website!

www.LepowFoot.com

When you visit our website, you'll be able to access important information about our practice, our services, and foot-health information.

THE DOCTORS
Learn about the doctors of Lepow Podiatric Medical Associates.

SPECIALIZED SERVICES
Learn about what we do in our office and community.

OFFICE LOCATIONS
Learn where we are located and find easy directions.

COMMON DISORDERS
Learn about foot and ankle problems and treatment options.

NEW PATIENT FORMS
Save time completing your new patient information.

MEDICAL STORE
Learn about medical products we recommend and how to order them.

ANIMATIONS
See examples of surgical and nonsurgical procedures performed by our doctors.