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## Enjoy Pregnancy Without Foot Pain

“Oh, my aching feet” is a phrase you hear often from pregnant women, but sore feet need not be a side effect of pregnancy.

If you are expecting, follow these guidelines to help alleviate three of the most common foot problems that can occur during pregnancy.

### 1. Painful, Swollen Feet

Pregnant women often experience throbbing, swollen feet due to excess fluid buildup (edema) in the feet from the weight and position of the baby. To reduce swelling:

- Put feet up whenever possible
- Stretch legs frequently
- Wear wide, comfortable shoes and compression socks or stockings
- Do not cross legs when sitting

### 2. Arch Pain

Pain in the arch can be due to both arch fatigue or overpronation (flattening of the arch). Overpronation causes extreme stress to the ligament (the plantar fascia) that holds up the arch of the foot. The best way to prevent arch pain is to:

- Stretch daily in the morning and before and after any exercise
- Avoid going barefoot
- Wear supportive low-heeled shoes
- Wear rigid inserts or custom orthotics made by a foot and ankle surgeon



### 3. Ingrown Toenails

Excessive stress from tightly fitting shoes can cause painful ingrown toenails. To help prevent ingrown toenails from forming, wear wider shoes during the last trimester of pregnancy. If you experience an ingrown toenail, do not perform “bathroom surgery.” Repeated cutting of the nail can cause the condition to worsen over time. Seek prompt treatment from a foot and ankle surgeon instead.

It is also not uncommon for women to experience a change in their foot size during pregnancy. A permanent growth in a woman’s foot, up to half a size, can occur from the release of the hormone relaxin, which allows the pelvis to open to deliver the baby. This hormone makes the ligaments in feet more flexible, causing feet to spread wider and longer.

**If you experience foot pain during pregnancy, make an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon. To find one near you, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org).**

## How to Spot Kids’ Foot Problems

Foot pain in kids is never normal, and it should not be put off as normal “growing pains.” While many pediatric foot problems resolve themselves with growth and time, there are clear signs that tell parents when their children need medical help.

Common pediatric foot problems can range from pediatric flat foot, toe walking, in-toeing and flat or high arches to tarsal coalitions and extra bone growth. While these conditions and their treatments are different, they share some common signs:

- Pain, swelling and redness that do not subside
- Development of thick calluses in one area of the foot
- Problems with the way your child walks (gait)

- Shins or thighbones that appear to turn inward
- Ankles that are weak or easily give out

A variety of treatment options for these conditions is available that parents can evaluate in partnership with their healthcare team. Whether a less invasive approach, such as shoe modifications, orthotic devices and physical therapy, or more intensive interventions, such as bracing, injections or surgery, a foot and ankle surgeon can advise parents on which treatment offers the best long-term prognosis for their children.

**Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you.**

# Healthy Feet Can Reduce Seniors' Risk of Falling



Among older Americans, falls are the number one cause of injuries and death from injury, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Not only are seniors more at risk for falls, when they do fall, it poses a greater risk for injuries, hospitalization and complications. For a ground-up approach to fall prevention, seniors should start by examining the health of their feet.

Painful foot conditions, such as osteoarthritis, corns, bunions, hammertoes, flat feet, high arches and diabetes complications, can make it difficult for seniors to maintain balance and coordination when walking or standing. Also, the very exercises intended to correct risk factors for falls, such as lower-body weakness, as well as gait and balance problems, are difficult to perform when one suffers from painful foot and ankle conditions.

While the factors causing falls are numerous, seniors can take the following steps to reduce their risk by minimizing or eliminating foot pain. Doing so will improve balance, coordination and stability when walking or standing.

**1. Do not ignore pain.** Foot pain is not just a normal consequence of growing older. It is likely a treatable condition. For proper diagnosis and treatment, be sure to pay attention to your feet and see a foot and ankle surgeon if you experience any pain.

**2. Examine your feet.** As the gatekeeper of your own health, make sure you examine your feet regularly. At the first sign of bumps, lumps or other changes in your feet, make an appointment with your local foot and ankle surgeon.

**3. Exercise.** Simple stretching exercises can help you maintain strength and mobility in your feet and ankles, as well as provide pain relief. A foot and ankle surgeon can explain which exercises are appropriate for you.

**4. Protect.** Use padding, insoles or whatever special footwear you are prescribed. Be sure to wear these, along with comfortable, sensible shoes, every day.

**5. Be flexible.** At times, surgery is the most appropriate treatment for a given condition. Fortunately, many simple surgical techniques allow foot surgery to be performed on an outpatient basis.

Just one fall can rob seniors of their independence and can dramatically reduce their quality of life. Taking good care of feet and ankles, however, can reduce the risk of a life-altering slip, trip or fall.

**Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](https://www.foothealthfacts.org) to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you.**

## High Ankle vs. Lateral Ankle Sprains: What's the Difference?

Ankle sprains may be one of the most common injuries, but they are also frequently misdiagnosed. The two major types of sprained ankles—high ankle sprains and lateral ankle sprains—often look the same even though they affect entirely different ligaments.

Pain, swelling, limited motion and bruising in the entire ankle region can occur in both high ankle sprains and lateral ankle sprains. The difference lies in where the injury occurs and which ligaments are involved.

When a foot and ankle surgeon diagnoses an ankle sprain, it is important for him or her to understand how the injury occurred. Lateral sprains are caused by the foot turning inward, whereas high ankle sprains are the result of the foot being forced outward.

High ankle sprains can be more complicated because this region has five ligaments connecting two bones in the leg, compared with three ligaments that can be affected in lateral ankle sprains. The more ligaments involved and the worse they are torn, the more severe the injury.



Also, the prognosis for a high ankle sprain is usually worse when compared to a low ankle sprain, and it often takes longer to heal or to return to play or competition. This is why it is critical to see a foot and ankle surgeon promptly to get an expected prognosis since all sprains differ in terms of recovery.

**Any time you see bruising or are unable to bear weight on your foot after an injury, contact a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible to make an appointment.**