

Stand Up for Your Feet in April

April is National Foot Health Awareness Month and a time when the experts at OSF HealthCare St. Joseph Medical Center Wound Care Clinic suggest people take a moment to stand up for their feet. Right now, 6.7 million Americans are living with a chronic wound, and more than two million of those are suffering from a diabetic foot ulcer.

Dr. Leonard is an OSF HealthCare podiatrist he says the awareness month is a great opportunity to encourage people to speak with their physician about any foot issues they are having. He says while foot issues are often a complication of diabetes, that's not always the case.

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Dr. Marc Leonard, OSF HealthCare Podiatrist

“Painful feet aren't normal. So our people without diabetes should also assess that. If they are having a problem, it might be a good time to reconsider other treatment options or see what's going on with that foot, because foot pain is not normal.” (:15)

Chronic foot and leg wounds are often caused by underlying conditions such as diabetes and vascular disease. Dr. Leonard says that foot issues left untreated could lead to a laundry list of painful problems that would impede mobility in some cases.

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Dr. Marc Leonard, OSF HealthCare Podiatrist

“It can lead to more significant consequences, whether that be a stress fracture or a sore in the foot, or an injury that's going to take a lot longer to heal because it wasn't treated appropriately when it was initially discovered.”

Some of the primary risk factors for wounds of the feet include: neuropathy, deformity of the foot, history of foot ulceration, absent or diminished pulses and prior amputation.

There are preventative measures everyone can do to improve foot health. Dr. Leonard offers the following foot care tips:

- Check your feet for red spots, cuts, swelling, blisters, sores or other injuries daily.
- Wash your feet every day and dry them with care, especially between the toes.
- Trim your toenails as needed after you've washed and dried your feet.
- Wear properly fitting shoes that do not rub or pinch your feet.
- Always wear socks or stockings with your shoes, and never walk barefoot or while wearing just socks.
- Physical activity can help increase circulation in your feet. Consult your healthcare team to see which physical activity is right for you.

Dr. Leonard says to take off your socks at your next check-up, and don't be too shy to alert your doctor to any problems with your feet.

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Dr. Marc Leonard, OSF HealthCare Podiatrist

“If there is a problem, talk with us. We look at feet all day long, so don’t be ashamed or embarrassed with anything. We see them all the time.” (:09)

The OSF St. Joseph Wound Care Clinic offers comprehensive wound care and leading-edge treatments including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, negative pressure wound therapy, bio-engineered skin substitutes, biological and biosynthetic dressings and growth factor therapies.

For more information on the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers or chronic or infected wounds, contact the OSF St. Joseph Wound Care Clinic by calling (309) 661-6230.