



## One Face of Diabetes: Peripheral Neuropathy

Peripheral neuropathy is a nerve disorder that typically affects the extremities. Repercussions for feet include a sensation of tingling, burning, or shooting pain; numbness; or impaired muscle movement.

Causes of peripheral neuropathy (PN) include blunt trauma (e.g., auto accident, sports injury), repetitive-stress injuries, certain medications, vitamin B12 deficiency, and alcoholism, among others. However, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association, the most frequent cause of PN is uncontrolled diabetes. Sixty to 70 percent of diabetics who aren't as vigilant in their care regimen as they should be will develop diabetic PN.

Numbness in the feet is of particular concern. Tingling or movement issues alert a person to a problem. With numbness, someone may develop a blister or suffer a scrape or laceration and never realize it, rendering them more susceptible to a dangerous ulcer and infection. Those with diabetic PN may also fail to sense damaging heat, cold, or pressure.

Although there is no cure for diabetic PN, the following measures can help manage it successfully:

- Prescription medications to relieve pain and burning.
- Physical therapy to improve balance and the ability to walk more easily.
- Custom orthotics to limit the movement of feet within shoes, decreasing friction; or to reduce pressure on vulnerable areas of the foot.
- Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) treatment to alleviate pain.
- Daily foot inspections. Report any changes to your podiatrist, such as redness, swelling, sores, cuts, calluses, corns, blisters, etc.

*Preventing* diabetic PN is an even better remedy. Diligence with one's diabetes treatment regimen, a healthy diet, daily exercise, avoiding excessive alcohol intake, and quitting smoking are key.



### About the Doctor

Matt Wettstein, DPM

Advanced Foot and Ankle is led by Dr. Matt Wettstein. Originally from Logan, UT, Dr. Wettstein completed his undergraduate studies at Utah State University before attending Des Moines University in the College of Podiatric Medicine and Surgery. After graduating with top honors, he then completed his residency in Salt Lake City, UT. Dr. Wettstein is married and has four, wonderful, children.

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# Signs Your Child's Feet or Ankles Are Hurting

When children experience foot and ankle discomfort, they are often reluctant to say anything to their parents. They may fear a trip to the dreaded doctor's office, being told they are temporarily banned from a favorite activity, or just don't think anything of it ... the pain's not too bad. Alert parents can prevent problems from getting worse.

Signs of foot or ankle discomfort vary. Some kids lag behind in sports or backyard activities. If there is an issue with the foot, muscles in the foot, ankle, and lower leg may have to work harder to compensate, resulting in fatigue. Flat feet are a common culprit.

Limping is an obvious sign that something is wrong. Ankle sprains and ingrown toenails are frequently to blame.

If your child withdraws from participating in activities they normally enjoy, it could be due to heel pain. Kids from ages 7 to 14 may experience inflammation of a growth plate at the back of the heel (Sever's disease).

Stress fractures can strike active kids. Repetitive stress on a bone from running and jumping can trigger pain in the affected area that will progressively worsen without rest, affecting athletic performance.

If your child's ankle gives out far too frequently, they may have chronic ankle instability. A previous ankle sprain that wasn't properly cared for typically precipitates this condition, which can have long-term consequences if left untreated.

Parents are encouraged to inspect young children's feet periodically. Look for discoloration or swelling; thick calluses at one particular area; and growths.

If you suspect a problem with your child's foot or ankle, contact a podiatrist for a proper evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment.



## Keeping Feet and Ankles Healthy While Playing Sports

Sports are a great way to get exercise, build self-confidence, and have some fun. Foot and ankle injuries sometimes come with the package. Certain injuries may be unavoidable, but many can be prevented with some simple measures.

Warm up before diving into an activity. It's eye-opening how many people bypass this step. Warm-ups don't have to be convoluted. A brisk five-minute walk or two to three minutes of light jogging followed by some stretching (no "bouncing") should do the trick.

Wear sport-specific footwear. For instance, wearing running shoes to play basketball is not ideal. Basketball shoes are designed for the cutting, quick stops, and jumping inherent in basketball; running shoes are not. In addition, make sure that shoes fit well and provide good arch support, and replace them when the tread or heels are visibly worn down.

If you're just beginning a new sport or have been inactive for a while, don't try to go full throttle immediately — that's a prescription for injury. Ease into it by participating at low intensity for a couple of weeks, then raise the intensity level in subsequent two-week intervals.

Beware of running on uneven surfaces. Nature trails contain many foot and ankle hazards: rocky terrain, hills with loose debris, hidden obstacles and holes, and tree roots.

Take regular breaks during a game to enable the body to recover and stay hydrated. Muscle fatigue raises the risk of injury.

Some muscle soreness is normal with most physical activity; pain is not. If you experience pain, stop. Attempting to tough it out will cause an injury or exacerbate an existing one.

# Give Your Immune System a Hand with These Tips

Every day we face a world full of organisms, and some are just not good for us. Thankfully, our bodies are equipped with immune systems to take out these invaders and keep us from becoming sick.

While we can't always beat everything, keeping our immune systems as healthy as possible can help reduce the frequency, length, and severity of illnesses. There is plenty you can do to give yourself a hand:

- **Eat immunity-boosting foods.** Eat foods rich in compounds that are highly suggested to benefit your immune system. This includes vitamin C, antioxidants, and allicin (found in garlic). The healthier options you can find for these, the better—so try to keep the sugar down and the nutritional value up.
- **Reduce your stress.** Persistent stress can weaken your body and its ability to fight disease. Taking some time to meditate or simply get away from anxieties when you feel stressed can be highly beneficial.
- **Exercise.** Not only is physical activity good for reducing stress, but it can greatly benefit your overall functioning as well. At least 10 minutes of cardio or strength training a day can be helpful, but going up to a half hour or more is even better.
- **Sleep well.** Another important tool in the anti-stress repertoire, treat sleep as a priority. Most people need 7-8 hours for optimal function and body recovery—and fighting off infections is part of that.

If you have challenges with stress, sleep, or fitness, consider speaking with your primary care physician. Getting some help can make a significant difference for your overall health.



## Greek Yogurt Chocolate Mousse

*Serves 4; calories per serving: 325; prep time: 5 minutes; cook time: 2 hours*

It's chocolaty, chilled, and healthier than regular mousse (but just as tasty!). Need we say more?

### Ingredients

- 3/4 cup milk
- 3-1/2 ounces dark chocolate
- 2 cups Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

### Instructions

1. Pour the milk into a saucepan and add the chocolate, either grated or very finely chopped or shaved. Gently heat the milk until the chocolate melts, being careful not to let it boil. Once the chocolate and milk have fully combined, add the honey and vanilla extract and mix well.
2. Spoon the Greek yogurt into a large bowl, and pour the chocolate mixture on top. Mix together well before transferring to individual bowls, ramekins, or glasses.
3. Chill in the fridge for 2 hours (if longer than that, cover with plastic wrap or foil). Serve with a small spoonful of Greek yogurt and some fresh raspberries.
4. The Greek yogurt chocolate mousse will keep in the fridge for 2 days.

*(Recipe courtesy of Ciara Attwell, [www.myfussyeater.com](http://www.myfussyeater.com).)*

# ADVANCED FOOT & ANKLE

176 Falls Ave, Ste 200, Twin Falls, ID 83301  
208-731-6321

1263 Bennett Ave, Burley, ID 83318  
208-312-4646

[www.idahofoot.com](http://www.idahofoot.com)



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# Don't Underestimate a Puncture Wound

In the summertime, many people ditch their footwear. The freedom, the luxurious comfort of lush grass caressing the feet ... the allure is understandable. Bare feet become commonplace indoors, too.

But ... puncture wounds are waiting to strike. Puncture wounds are not the same as cuts. A cut is an open wound that causes a long tear in the skin. A puncture wound occurs when something pointy — such as a nail, piece of glass, sewing needle, toothpick, jagged seashell, etc. — penetrates the skin and leaves only a small entry hole in its wake.

A puncture wound on the foot can be more sinister than a cut. It might not look as sensational (many don't bleed much), but it frequently runs deeper. The penetrating object could become embedded. At the very least, it will drag in dirt and debris from the outside and possibly deposit a tiny piece of itself (or rust) in the wound.

The deeper a puncture wound, the higher the risk of complications. Since depth can be hard to judge, immediate professional treatment is the safest course of action. A prompt cleaning is imperative, as delays can lead to infection — *always* a serious matter. For those who have lost sensation in their feet, puncture wounds highlight the importance of daily foot inspections.

If the wound was treated during an ER visit, call a podiatrist for a follow-up visit as soon as possible. ER attendants perform a great service, but they are not experts of the foot and ankle.

Proper footwear is your best bet to avoid puncture wounds, both indoors and outdoors. If you suffer a puncture wound, contact a podiatrist for an evaluation and treatment.

