

Diabetic Socks — More Important Than Christmas Stockings

Socks are often an overlooked component of good foot health. Diabetics can't afford to make that mistake, as diabetic-related nerve damage and compromised circulation can lead to serious foot problems, such as ulcers, infection, and potential amputation.

The following are some features to look for in diabetic socks:

Moisture-wicking fibers help keep feet dry. The fibers draw moisture away from the foot, then through the material to the surface on the other side, where it evaporates. Polyester, nylon, and merino wool are good wicking fibers, whereas 100% cotton is not. Moisture that's not wicked away elevates friction and is a haven for bacteria and fungus.

Diabetic socks should be **seamless**. Socks with seams can rub against the skin and bunch up or wrinkle — more friction ups the risk of blisters, chafing, and sores, which are serious matters for diabetics.

Diabetic socks should be nonconstricting and have a good stretch design. In other words, there should be no elastic band at the top of the sock. This promotes good circulation and facilitates healing.

Socks should have **extra padding** and cushioning where feet are exposed to the most shock (e.g., heel area, ball of the foot).

A **white sole** is important for those with decreased sensitivity due to peripheral neuropathy. A white backdrop will alert the wearer to any bleeding or draining on the bottom of the foot.

Diabetic socks are typically treated with **antimicrobial technology** in moisture-prone areas of the foot to fend off bacteria and fungus and eliminate foot odor.

If you have questions about diabetic socks, please give our office a call.

About the Doctor



Dr. Lisa J. Brandy, our founder and podiatric physician and surgeon, has been Keeping Texans on their feet for more

than 30 years! She specializes in diagnosis and advanced treatments for all conditions of the feet and ankles, with a special passion for heel pain and diabetic foot care.

A 1991 graduate of the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine, Dr. Brandy pursued residency training from the School College of Podiatry in Chicago and the VA Medical Center in Allen Park, Michigan. After her postgraduate work, she moved to Texas. She worked as an associate podiatric surgeon in several South Texas clinics for eight years before founding Trinity Foot Center in 2001.



This Winter, Prepare Your Feet for Summer

Ten percent of Americans have toenail fungus, an unsightly, annoying, and sometimes underestimated condition. Funguses thrive in warm, moist environments (showers, locker rooms, poolside, sweaty shoes, etc.). As we age, our immune systems weaken and toenails also become more brittle and subject to cracks, providing added opportunity for fungal infections.

Frequently, the first sign of toenail fungus is a whitish or yellowish spot beneath the nail surface. If ignored, the situation can progress to nail discoloration, thickening, shape distortion, an odor most foul, and pain that makes walking a chore.

Untreated toenail fungus can also spread to neighboring nails and skin. It's an even more concerning condition for those with diabetes, circulatory issues, and immune disorders.

Some people try to hide fungal nails under polish. "Out of sight, out of mind" doesn't solve anything. The problem will just worsen as the fungus becomes more deeply entrenched in the nail layers. Over-the-counter medications are useless for advanced cases.

Your best game plan is to schedule an appointment with our office. Once we evaluate your nail(s) and confirm a diagnosis of toenail fungus, we will help you devise a treatment plan. Oral medications, medicated polishes and creams are conservative options.. In advanced cases, the nail may need to be removed.

Achieving the desired result isn't instantaneous. For example, oral medication may need to be taken for six to 12 weeks. Laser therapy might require several sessions scheduled about a month apart. The healed nail will also need to completely grow out to reach full cosmetic effect — typically six months to a year.

Warm weather heralds the arrival of sandal and open-toed shoe season. Start getting ready *now*.

Mark Your Calendars

- Dec. 4** Santa's List Day: If Santa's naughty/nice list is only made on Dec. 4, the elves deserve a raise.
- Dec. 7** Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day: The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor a second time on March 4, 1942, unsuccessfully.
- Dec. 18** Hanukkah (begins sundown): To commemorate the miracle oil burning for eight nights, many Hanukkah foods are fried in oil.
- Dec. 21** Winter Solstice: Occurs the instant the North Pole is farthest from the sun (4:48 p.m. this year).
- Dec. 25** Christmas: The Friday and Saturday before Christmas are busier shopping days than Black Friday.
- Dec. 26 – Jan. 1** Kwanzaa: A annual celebration of African American culture for 7 nights a candle is lit to observe a different principle.
- Dec. 31** New Year's Eve: The Times Square ball weighs nearly six tons.



Christmas Is Good for You ... Duh!

Family, friends, food, gifts, decorations, music, faith, church events, and time off are more obvious components of Christmas cheer, but physiological/psychological factors are at work, too.

Decorating the Christmas tree is a mood booster. It reconnects us with good childhood memories — and simpler, less stressful times. The feel-good hormone dopamine is also released when we're doing something pleasant, enhancing the enjoyment.

Speaking of Christmas trees, researchers have long known that being surrounded by nature is good for one's well-being. And that includes bringing a little bit of it inside your home (minus the stray squirrel). According to the *Journal of Physiological Anthropology*, touching and smelling plants can reduce stress. In addition, a Norwegian study found that sickness rates fell in offices and school settings by 25 percent when plants were present. A Christmas tree in every room!

Many people love to sing when no one's around — it's fun and relieves stress. But a *Frontiers in Psychology* study from 2013 found that choral singing (caroling!) was even better, as it increased singers' heart-rate variances. Low variance can lead to high blood pressure. God rest ye merry, gentlemen!

Holidays full of good cheer produce laughter, the short-term benefits of which include reduced stress, and stimulation of the heart, lungs, and muscles. Long-term benefits include an improved immune system. Laughter is good medicine ... no prescription required.

Gift giving (and receiving) makes us feel good, but research has shown that experiential gifts do more to strengthen relationships than material gifts, regardless of whether the receiver's experience is shared with the giver or not. Saves on gift wrap, too.

Have yourself a healthy, merry Christmas!



Roast Pork and Sweet Potatoes with Spicy Cabbage

Yield: 4 servings; prep time: 10 min.; cook time: 45 min.;
total time: 55 min.

This impressive pork tenderloin dinner is surprisingly simple to make.

Ingredients

- 2½ lb. sweet potatoes, cut into ½-inch chunks
- 2 tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 pork tenderloin (1¼ lb.)
- ¼ c. barbecue sauce
- ½ medium head red cabbage, thinly sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 jalapeño, thinly sliced
- ¼ c. cider vinegar

Directions

1. On large, rimmed baking sheet, toss sweet potatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil and ¼ teaspoon salt; roast in a 450°F oven for 30 minutes.
2. In deep 12-inch skillet, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil on medium-high. Season pork tenderloin with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Brown pork on all sides; transfer to baking sheet with potatoes. Brush pork with barbecue sauce; roast 16 minutes or until cooked through (145°F).
3. To same skillet on medium, add red cabbage, green onions, jalapeño, and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook 12 minutes or until cabbage is tender, stirring. Stir in cider vinegar.
4. Serve pork with potatoes and cabbage.

Recipe courtesy of www.goodhousekeeping.com/food-recipes.



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When Your Child Has a Lot on Their Plate

All growing children have growth plates — soft areas of cartilage where new bone growth occurs, typically at the ends of long bones (i.e., arms, legs, feet). One such area where growth plates reside, and trouble sometimes springs up, is the forefoot.

The metatarsal bones, the long ones running along the top of the foot, connect with the toes. Sometimes repetitive stress causes microfractures in the metatarsals at the growth plates. Circulation to the bone is impeded, and cellular death occurs in the head of the bone. This condition is known as Freiberg's disease. Although it's not common, it's still a pain in the ... foot for kids to deal with.

The second metatarsal is most susceptible, and in some patients that's because their second toe is longer than their big toe, bearing more weight and absorbing more shock than normal. For reasons as yet unclear, young girls are over three times as susceptible to Freiberg's as boys.

The calling cards of Freiberg's are pain and discomfort in the forefoot, swelling, and stiffness in the joint (metatarsophalangeal joint), which may cause a noticeable limp. The RICE method (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) may help initially, but symptoms will eventually intensify and become more persistent without professional care.

If your child is dealing with forefoot pain, contact our office. If we diagnose Freiberg's disease, conservative treatments are highly effective and may include a combination of immobilization (boot or cast), medication for inflammation and pain, metatarsal pads, physical therapy, orthotics, and properly fitting shoes with a wide toe box. Left untreated, Freiberg's can eventually cause arthritis and might require surgery.

