



### About the Doctor

Lucy Meier, DPM



Dr. Lucy Meier is a Wisconsin native and grew up on a strawberry farm in Sturgeon

Bay. She aspired to be a foot doctor since she was twelve years old. She attended the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse before going to podiatry school at Rosalind Franklin University in North Chicago. She completed three years of surgical training at Legacy Wheaton Franciscan Hospitals, here in Milwaukee. She loves to teach and is currently the Assistant Director for the Foot and Ankle Surgery Residency Program at Ascension Hospitals in SE Wisconsin. Dr. Meier is a proud mom of two young girls, Zoey and Nora. When she has time to herself, she loves to read history, specifically presidential biographies!

## Do's and Don'ts of Kids' Baseball Cleats

With spring upon us, youth baseball and softball leagues will soon be in full swing. Purchasing properly fitting cleats can optimize your child's performance.

Both your child's feet should be measured while they're standing. If there is a slight discrepancy in length, choose the shoe size that fits the larger foot. Have your child wear their gameday or practice-day socks. Also, shop for shoes later in the day, when feet are slightly swollen. A seemingly good fit earlier in the day may become uncomfortable as the day progresses.

There should be room in the toe box: half a thumb's width to a full thumb's width beyond the big toe. That leaves room to grow without interfering with running or walking. Cleats should be comfortable the first time they're worn. Don't be fooled into thinking they'll get "broken in" — blisters await.

New cleats should be worn a few times prior to practices or games so your child gets a feel for them. Never allow your child to wear secondhand cleats. Wear patterns on the soles and insoles are unique to each wearer. Wearing cleats geared to the previous owner may result in gait abnormalities, ankle sprains, blisters, and arch or heel pain.

Cleats worn off the playing surface can be slippery and hazardous. Kids should switch to other shoes as soon as the game/practice is over.

If your child plays several sports, it's not always practical to buy sport-specific cleats for each one. Soccer cleats are very versatile and can cross over for baseball and lacrosse use; the reverse isn't necessarily true.

If your child deals with recurring foot or ankle issues caused by cleats, schedule a complete evaluation at our office.

# When the Whole Joint Gets Bent Out of Shape



A bunion is a deformity of the metatarsophalangeal (MTP) joint, located at the base of the big toe. The first metatarsal bone (one of five that run along the top of the foot) turns outward, the big toe points inward, and the infamous bump appears.

Bunions might make wearing shoes a bit uncomfortable or downright painful, which of course can interfere with daily activities. With the big toe out of alignment, other foot abnormalities may crop up, such as hammertoes, corns, calluses, or ball-of-the-foot pain.

Foot structure is inherited, and some structures are more predisposed to bunion formation. For example, flat feet, low arches, and loose tendons and joints all pave the way for bunions.

Overall, men and women are equally predisposed to bunions, but women develop them 10 times as often as men. Weaker connective tissue plays a role, so does footwear selection. For instance, high heels don't cause bunions, but for those more predisposed, high heels exacerbate the situation by exerting excessive pressure on the front of the foot and cramming toes into a narrow toe box. Occupations requiring a lot of standing and walking, and previous foot or ankle injuries don't help matters.

Additional causes of bunions include arthritic conditions, which damage cartilage within the MTP joint, and pregnancy, since hormonal changes can loosen ligaments and flatten feet.

Many times, bunions can be managed well with conservative measures. However, when conservative measures fail to alleviate pain and quality of life is diminished, it may be time to consider surgery. The longer you wait, the more complex the situation becomes.

If a bunion is giving you problems, contact our office to schedule an examination.

## Mark Your Calendars

- March 6** Dentist's Day: Getting some people to go to the dentist is like pulling teeth.
- March 7** Cereal Day: Added sugars arrived in 1939, making some cereals a little less healthy.
- March 10** Middle Name Pride Day: Harry Truman's legal middle name was "S."
- March 14** Daylight Saving Time begins: Car accident and heart attack risks rise significantly.
- March 19** Poultry Day: Celebrate the domestic fowl in your life ... and on your plate.
- March 23** Chip and Dip Day: Never double dip. George Costanza found out the hard way.
- March 26** Live Long and Prosper Day: Too illogical for Spock? Check out *The Wrath of Khan*.





# Shamrocks and Alcohol Don't Sit Well with Pets

St. Patrick's Day is a holiday steeped in tradition, but some of those traditions don't mesh with dogs and cats. Keep your furry (or hairless) friend safe by being mindful of the following....

**Green beer and other alcoholic beverages.** Although most dogs and cats don't find alcohol appealing, an unpredictable minority do and will gladly help themselves to an unguarded drink. And because dogs and cats are much smaller than human celebrants, it doesn't take nearly as much alcohol (ethanol) to endanger them.

Even the vast majority of pets who aren't enticed by alcohol might be drawn to mixed drinks or alcohol-based cakes that contain lots of sugar.

Signs your pet may have knocked one back include unsteadiness, disorientation, lethargy, and upset stomach. Severe cases may induce paralysis, shallow breathing, and unconsciousness. For mild symptoms, a pet can generally "sleep it off" in a safe place. More ominous symptoms require an immediate call to the vet.

Bottom line, don't leave drinks unattended, place them above your pet's eye level, or keep your pet isolated until the party's over.

**Shamrocks.** Shamrocks aren't so lucky for pets who ingest them. Several plants are classified as shamrocks, but *Oxalis acetosella* — often given as a St. Patrick's Day gift — is the primary troublemaker. Dogs and cats who swallow this hazard may experience almost immediate head shaking, drooling, and upset stomach. It can also damage the kidneys. Fortunately, this plant tastes fairly bitter, which dissuades many pets ... but not all.

Keep these plants off the floor and away from curious noses and mouths. If your pet is showing signs of having taken a nibble, contact your vet pronto.



## Oven-Baked Super Green Falafels

*These oven-baked falafels make a great on-the-go snack and can add more substance to salads!*

### Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas (14 oz.), drained and rinsed
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup (4¼ oz.) frozen peas, slightly thawed
- 2 tablespoons white chia seeds
- 1 cup (3 oz.) finely chopped broccoli
- 2 cups (2½ oz.) firmly packed shredded kale leaves
- 1 cup (¾ oz.) flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ½ cup (1¼ oz.) mint leaves
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- Sea salt and cracked black pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for brushing
- Flatbreads, to serve (your choice of flatbreads!)
- Arugula, to serve
- Sliced radishes, to serve
- Labneh, to serve

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425 °F. Line a large baking tray with nonstick baking paper.
2. Place the chickpeas, onion, peas, chia seeds, broccoli, kale, parsley, mint, cumin, baking powder, salt, and pepper in a food processor, and process until very finely chopped.
3. Press 2-tablespoon portions of the mixture into patties and place on the tray. Brush the patties generously with oil and bake for 15 minutes. Brush the patties with more oil and bake for a further 15 minutes or until golden and crisp.
4. Divide flatbreads between serving plates and top with arugula, radish, labneh, and the falafels to serve.

(Leftovers can be stored in the fridge — in an airtight container — for up to 2 days.)

*Recipe courtesy of Donna Hay, an Australian food stylist, author, and magazine editor. <https://www.donnahay.com.au/recipes/fresh-light>*



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Do's and Don'ts of Kids'  
Baseball Cleats

See page one.

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# Poor Circulation Is Rich with Consequences

Reduced circulation in the lower extremities caused by plaque buildup in blood vessels is called peripheral arterial disease (PAD). Ten to 12 million Americans, and one in five people over age 70, grapple with it. PAD and diabetes combined account for the majority of foot and leg amputations in the United States.

Unfortunately, most people do not experience symptoms in PAD's earliest stages. When they eventually do, PAD has already gained traction.

Common symptoms of PAD include pain or cramping in the calf after walking for a few minutes. Stopping to rest allows enough blood to return to the calf, and the discomfort dissipates ... until walking is resumed (a.k.a. intermittent claudication).

Other indicators for advancing PAD include lower-leg fatigue/weakness; skin discoloration; less supple skin; skin that feels cool to the touch; cessation of hair growth; changes in toenail color or thickness; and slow-to-heal abrasions, cuts, and other issues. When PAD overlaps peripheral neuropathy (diminished sensation in the feet), it's double trouble. Peripheral neuropathy may hide injuries, and PAD interferes with healing. Conditions are ripe for ulceration and infection, precursors to amputation.

If you experience discomfort, pain, or fatigue in your lower extremities, schedule an evaluation at our office. A simple test for PAD is an ankle-brachial index, which compares blood pressure in the ankle with that of the arm. If PAD seems likely, you may be referred to a vascular specialist, since circulation problems likely exist elsewhere in the body, too.

Fortunately, PAD can be successfully managed — or better yet, prevented! Exercise; a heart-healthy diet; ditching all tobacco products; shedding extra pounds; and medication to control hypertension, high cholesterol, and diabetes help immensely. Severe cases may necessitate surgery.

