



# Third Coast FOOT AND ANKLE

News and Updates

## April 2021

# April Is National Foot Health Awareness Month

## 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!



According to the American Podiatric Medical Association, a person typically takes 8,000 to 10,000 steps per day. Over an average life span, that's roughly four trips around the globe — quite a hike.

A foot's workload and complexity — 26 bones, 33 joints, and a network of over 100 ligaments, muscles, and tendons — sometimes lead to trouble without proper attention. Twenty percent of Americans experience at least one foot problem per year.

National Foot Health Awareness Month is a reminder of the importance of keeping your feet in tip-top shape year-round:

- Don't ignore lingering foot or ankle pain. It's a signal that something is wrong; it's never "normal." Promptly schedule a podiatric exam.
- Inspect your feet daily — tops, bottoms, between the toes, and heels. This is especially important for those with diabetes to stay ahead of infection and nonhealing wounds.
- Footwear should fit well, have good arch support, low heels, shock-absorbent soles, and be activity-specific. For some issues, orthotics may prove beneficial.
- Replace athletic shoes every six months or 500 miles. Rotate pairs to give them a chance to dry out, which lowers the risk of infection.
- Exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet to achieve or maintain a healthy weight, which reduces the burden on feet and ankles.
- When applying sunscreen, don't forget your feet!
- Wash your feet each day, and thoroughly dry them (between the toes, too).
- Visit our office for an annual foot exam (critically important for diabetics). We can diagnose and treat abnormalities of the feet and ankles; prevent or correct deformities; treat infections; relieve pain; analyze gait; offer guidance on proper footwear; monitor feet when systemic conditions are in play (e.g., diabetes); and perform surgery when other options are exhausted.

# Don't Give Chronic Ankle Instability an Open Invitation



Most people at one time or another have sprained an ankle. Falls, landing awkwardly on your foot after jumping or pivoting, and walking or running on uneven surfaces can all do the trick.

When you sprain an ankle, ligaments — tough bands of tissue that stabilize joints — get stretched beyond their normal range of motion. In some cases, they tear, partially or completely. What you do, or don't do, following an ankle sprain can have long-term consequences.

Most sprains will result in some degree of discomfort and swelling. The RICE method (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) should be your first course of action. This may be all that's needed for a mild sprain. You should experience significant improvement within a few days.

Moderate to serious sprains include increased pain and swelling, and possibly bruising or difficulty putting weight on the ankle. In addition to RICE, call our office right away. We will examine the ankle to gauge the extent of the damage and to rule out additional causes of your discomfort (e.g., a fracture).

Without treatment, you run the risk of developing chronic ankle instability. Ligaments that don't heal properly can't provide needed ankle-joint stability. The ankle may "give way" while walking or engaging in other activities, or even while just standing. Ankle instability leads to more sprains; each sprain worsens instability. A vicious cycle. There might be ongoing tenderness and swelling as well.

Chronic ankle instability decreases quality of life and could possibly lead to surgery. Moderate and severe ankle sprains call for prompt podiatric action. Even seemingly mild ones should be checked out if healing is lagging.

## Mark Your Calendars

- April 2** Reconciliation Day: Patch up those shaky relationships before it's too late.
- April 11** Eight-Track Tape Day: Nothing like a favorite song split into two segments.
- April 12** Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day: Americans consume 2.2 billion/year. Is that all?
- April 14** National Dolphin Day: Dolphins are a type of whale, but not all whales are dolphins.
- April 19** National Garlic Day: Dracula suffered from alliumphobia.
- April 22** Jelly Bean Day: Jelly Belly was the first brand in space (1983 Challenger mission).
- April 27** Babe Ruth Day: The first player to earn \$50,000+ per year (\$793K in today's dollars).



# Not All Sugars Are the Same

Natural sugars are found in fresh fruits and vegetables (fructose), or dairy products such as milk and cheese (lactose), among others. They typically come integrated with important vitamins, minerals, fiber, and protein.

“Added sugars” are sugars added to foods or drinks during processing or preparation. Generally, these sugars (a.k.a. “refined sugars”) have been extracted from sugar cane or sugar beets, and stripped of the plants’ nutritional benefits. Added sugars are more highly concentrated than natural sugars.

The body metabolizes natural and added sugars quite differently. Added sugars are broken down rapidly in the digestive tract, causing blood-sugar and insulin levels to skyrocket. With rapid digestion, there’s room for more food, more quickly. Overconsumption of processed foods is a recipe for weight gain and its associated health consequences.

Conversely, proteins (and fats) in dairy products and the fiber in fresh fruits and veggies cause the digestive tract to work harder (fiber is never truly digested), slowing digestion and stabilizing blood-sugar levels. Fiber also absorbs water and expands, making a person feel fuller.

Honey and maple syrup are considered added sugars, despite their natural form. Their effects mirror those of added sugars. They offer sweetness but little more.

As of 2020, all food labels must distinguish between sugars (natural) and added sugars. It pays to check them. Added-sugar amounts often fly under the radar, examples being salad dressings, spaghetti sauces, canned soups, frozen pizzas, ketchup, etc.

The 2015–2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 48 grams or less of added sugars in a 2,000-calorie/day diet. The American Heart Association is less forgiving: 24 grams per day for women; 36 for men. (**Note:** These guidelines are for people who don’t have diabetes. Diabetics should follow doctor recommendations.)

## Slow-Cooker Vegetable Minestrone Soup

Servings: 8; prep time: 30 mins.; cooking time: 6 to 8 hrs.

*This crock-pot version of minestrone is heavy on the vegetables and light on the pasta, keeping carbs in check while providing plenty of flavor.*

### Ingredients

- 4 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 cans (15-ounce) no-sodium-added red kidney beans, rinsed
- 2 cans (15-ounce) no-sodium-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 6 cups no-sodium-added vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 large zucchini, chopped
- 4 ounces whole-wheat pasta elbows or other small pasta (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

### Directions

**Step 1.** Combine carrots, celery, onion, garlic, green beans, kidney beans, tomatoes, broth, Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper in a 6- to 8-qt. slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

**Step 2.** Stir in zucchini, pasta, and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover and cook on low until the pasta is tender, 15 to 20 minutes more. Serve immediately, topping each serving with about 1½ tablespoons Parmesan.

### Equipment

6- to 8-qt. slow cooker

Recipe courtesy of the EatingWell website, [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com).



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

See page one.

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# The Many Benefits of Walking

Warmer weather lends itself to more outdoor activity. One activity whose health benefits are tough to beat is walking.

Walking puts your feet through their full range of motion and strengthens and tones muscles. These benefits are shared with the ankles, legs, and even your glutes and abdominal region.

Walking is an aerobic exercise, which gets your heart pumping faster to transport oxygen-rich blood from the lungs to the muscles. The more you do it, the more efficient your heart and lungs will become.

A consistent walking regimen (four times per week, 30 minutes per walk) can help you achieve or maintain a healthy body weight. A brisk walk (3 mph or more) can burn 100 calories per mile. In turn, this aids the body in regulating blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood-sugar levels, and helps fend off cardiovascular disease. Carrying excess weight is a burden to feet, ankles, and knees, and can lead to a host of painful conditions.

Taking regular walks diminishes the odds of developing osteoporosis later in life, which is especially important for women. And remember, each foot is home to 26 bones.

Walking is excellent for mental health, too. Brisk exercise spurs the release of endorphins, which are chemicals released by the brain that relieve depression or anxiety, and elevate mood.

A good pair of walking shoes is all you need to get started. Our office can provide guidance on shoe purchases — some shoes are better matches for certain foot types — or offer recommendations for flexibility and resistance exercises to further improve your foot and ankle health.

