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How to Avoid Common Foot and Make Sure They Never Happen To You!

Bee Stings:

In most cases, the stings of bees and other insects are not very serious. In many cases, no treatment is necessary. For people who are allergic to bee stings, treatment is extremely important. This type of allergic reaction is usually caused by the sting of a bumble bee, hornet, wasp, or yellow jacket. It may also be caused by the bite from an ant or spider. Stings are usually painful, and sometimes itchy. They often result in swelling and heat.

If chills, fever, nausea, vomiting, cramps and/or breathing difficulties occur within minutes after a sting, call a rescue squad since this is a medical emergency (an "anaphylactic reaction"). If these symptoms occur within 24-48 hours, call me. Such symptoms indicate a typical allergic reaction. If the reaction is severe and you are on the way to the doctor or emergency room, place ice around the area to slow the absorption of venom.

If the reaction is localized, swelling and itching due to multiple bites in an area might last 24-48 hours before subsiding. If you show an unusual allergic reaction at all to your very first sting, stay away from insect prevalent areas and make proper arrangements with your physician for proper handling of any future sting. These steps will help in the initial treatment:

1. Put ice on the area for five minutes on and five minutes off for 30 minutes to help reduce the swelling.
2. Wash the area with soap and water.
3. Coat the wound with vegetable oil for about 30 minutes. If a stinger is visible, try to remove it with sterile tweezers. Repeat the ice treatment.
4. Use calamine lotion or Cort-Aid for the itching. You can also use baking soda or half a teaspoon of meat tenderizer with two teaspoons of water.
5. If the swelling does not do down in 24-48 hours and severe pain remains (or if the stinger cannot be removed), call me. Also, make sure that you have had your tetanus booster in the last ten years.

Broken Toes

Broken toes often go untreated and can result in deformed toes in the

future. A common toe fracture is caused by bumping a toe against a piece of furniture. Many broken toes are displaced and, if not properly treated, cause problems in the future. With the use of an x-ray, a fracture can be diagnosed. If it is displaced, it can be realigned (put back where it belongs) in the office.

Symptoms of a broken toe include discoloration, swelling, and pain. Remember, if you are a diabetic or have decreased circulation or any type of neuropathy (numbness, loss of feeling), prompt medical attention is very important.

Children's Growth Plate Fractures

Epiphyseal fractures are fractures of the growth plates in children. Children's bones are not completely formed, and if injured and left untreated, deformities may result. If the growth plate is injured, it may lead to a shortened bone or an angulation (bending) type of deformity in the bone. When a child sprains an ankle or complains of pain, it is important to seek proper attention and treatment. Children usually will not complain of pain without cause. If your child limps or complains of pain, you should give me a call. Young patients with a sprain of the ankle or foot may have a fracture of the growth plate in any of the bones in the foot or the ankle. Therefore, the foot and ankle may need to be immobilized in a cast for a minimum of 3-4 weeks.

Nail Trauma

Everyone at some time has either stubbed a toe or dropped something on a toe. When this occurs, the nail may often be injured, and bleeding occurs beneath the nail. The nail may then turn black or blue and may eventually be lost.

In this case, I may need to release the blood under the nail, or in severe cases, I may need to remove the nail. The nail bed (skin under the nail) may be cut and need immediate attention. Such an injury is serious and needs professional wound care and possibly antibiotic therapy as soon as possible.

Regrowth of the nail after injury depends on the extent of the damage to the nail "root" or matrix. These are the specialized cells of the skin that produce the nail plate. If the nail root is not involved in the injury, then the chances of having a normal nail return are good. If the root cells are damaged, the nail may return thickened or deformed.

Burn Injuries

The two most common types of burn injuries that I see are thermal (a burn caused by contact and transfer of heat to the skin) and chemical (a substance that causes tissue damage). With a thermal burn, if contact with the hot object lasts long enough, damage can also occur to structures beneath the level of the skin. The severity of a chemical burn depends on the strength, concentration, and length of contact with the chemical. It is important to obtain the name of the chemical which caused the burn, so that specific treatment can be started to neutralize the chemical reaction.

Depending on the extent of the burn, treatment can range from cool compresses to debridement (manual removal of damaged tissue). If you have diabetes or poor circulation, you need to call right away to help prevent infection or further damage.

Foreign Bodies

A foreign body injury occurs when an object breaks through the out layers of skin and becomes embedded within the deeper tissues of the foot. Anytime you have a puncture wound in the foot, you should call me at (301)695-1010 so I can determine if an object is embedded in the foot. Often, an x-ray is not enough to visualize the object unless it is metal or contains lead. These objects may require further studies such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computerized axial tomography (CAT) scans to identify the foreign body and its location. If the wound was dirty, you should have a tetanus booster if you have not had one in the last ten years.

If a foregn body is left in the foot, it can continue to move into deeper tissues amd may require surgical removal and antibiotic treatment.