5 PRINCIPLES OF SENIOR FOOT CARE

Good foot health is especially important for senior citizens. The longer your feet stay healthy, the longer you can maintain an active and independent lifestyle. Simply follow these 5 guidelines put forth by the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA) and the Institute for Preventative Foot Health (IPFH):

**PRINCIPLE 1**

**PROPER FOOT HYGIENE**

Simple daily routines can go a long way when it comes to promoting foot health among senior citizens. Feet should be washed daily, taking special care to wash between the toes. Just as important as daily washing is making sure that the feet are dried thoroughly. Damp feet in shoes can lead to infections, such as fungal toenails and Athlete’s foot. Footwear should also be kept clean and dry. Rotate footwear regularly, and purchase shoes with removable insoles – a feature that makes it easier to thoroughly dry shoes overnight.

**PRINCIPLE 2**

**REGULAR FOOT INSPECTIONS**

If left untreated, small cuts and sore spots on the feet can lead to more serious infections. Foot ulcers (open wounds on the feet) are common among senior citizens who fail to notice minor foot injuries early on. Reduced nervous sensation and circulation in the feet mean that the feet will need to be inspected visually. A family member or friend may need to help out if there are problems with eyesight or flexibility.

**PRINCIPLE 3**

**PROPER NAIL CARE**

Failure to trim nails properly can lead to ingrown toenails and various infections. Toenails should be cut straight across to prevent the corners of the nail from growing into the skin. File away any sharp edges. If a toenail does become ingrown or infected, see a podiatrist who can care for it properly. This is especially true for senior citizens with diabetes or anyone who is particularly vulnerable to infections on their feet. Discolored or abnormally thick toenails may be a sign of a fungal infection. If the discoloration or tenderness persists, speak to your doctor.
FOOT CARE FOR DIABETICS

Senior citizens with diabetes must be particularly vigilant when it comes to the care of their feet. Daily foot inspections are crucial, and your doctor should also inspect your feet on a regular basis. Invest in a pair of orthopedic shoes. Avoid going barefoot or soaking your feet in hot water.

PROPER FOOTWEAR

Supportive footwear is especially important when it comes to preserving good foot health. Look for shoes that protect and support your feet. Orthopedic walking shoes often provide a good combination of comfort and support. Avoid shoes with narrow toes or little arch support. Make sure your shoes fit you properly and can accommodate the socks you usually wear.

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