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Friendly Foot Advice

The Good Shoe: 1. Adequate width; 2. Tie, buckle or straps; 3. Low heels; and, 4. leather or breathable (such as canvas) uppers. Read the label inside the shoes and avoid uppers made with man-made materials.

Since feet sweat, shoes get wet, and shoes need two days to dry. So I advise that you alternate your shoes daily to prevent moisture build up and athlete's foot which is a fungal infection. If you are fighting fungal nails/athlete's foot, keep the feet and shoes dry and sprayed with an over-the-counter antifungal medication such as Tinactin. Also, your shoes should be fumigated after treating any fungus condition. This can be done by putting your shoes in a tied plastic bag with moth balls for three days. A laundry clothes softener sheet, such as "Bounce, Snuggle or Downey", can be used to reduce the moth ball odor.

Often the starting cause of a fungal nail is micro-trauma, the result of a poor fitting shoe. The longer first, second or, sometimes, outside fifth toe nails are more often the starting areas of the fungal nail. Make sure there is ample room in the toe box of the shoe and that your foot is not slipping forward in the shoe.

Socks: If it leaves a ring on your leg at the top of the sock, it is too tight and stopping the return circulation from your foot. Dyes in socks have improved over what was sometimes an allergic problem in the past. The man-made materials in some socks may have some benefit in pulling away moisture.

Circulation: Look at the veins in your hand. Now elevate your hand above your heart. See how the veins become less full of blood and pressure? The

vein pressure in your feet is even higher, especially after having been on them all day. Give your feet a decompression break and elevate them at least to the level of your heart. Although great for watching TV, a recliner chair doesn't really get your feet high enough. Your feet need to be at minimum, level with your heart or higher. Of course this is very helpful for anyone with varicose/spider veins or after foot surgery or injury.

Fungus: Most over-the-counter products are fungistatic and suppress the growth of fungus. The newer, advanced over-the-counter products are now more effective in that they are fungicidal and more effectively "kill" fungus. Before applying, clean and dry your feet. Since, early nail fungus often starts as a yellow discoloration on the corner of the nail, cut and/or file it away! Then clean the nail using a soft nail brush followed by applying the fungicidal cream. (And don't overlook the shoe care mentioned previously.)

Physical Therapy: Treat yourself to some home therapy of hot and cold soaks. Before retiring, set yourself by the bath tub. Fill the tub with three inches of warm to hot water (elbow test it if your feet are less sensitive; e.g., from diabetes). Place a basin of two quarts of water with a tray of ice cubes in it by your chair. Soak your feet for three minutes in the hot water, then only 30 seconds in the cold (all one can normally stand). Then back into the hot water. Repeat the procedure for 15-20 minutes. If the bath water cools add more hot water. The feet turn red in the hot water and white in the cold. The blood vessels open and close as hot and cold immersions are repeated. Its best to do this at night before retiring. Afterwards, try a therapeutic cream massaged onto the feet.