



FEET FIRST!

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Please enjoy this monthly newsletter, written especially for our patients and those whom you care about. If this month's topic can benefit a friend or family member, please feel free to pass it on so that others can experience the same superior service that you have come to know!

The Charcot Foot in Diabetes



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Patients with diabetes are prone to foot problems as a general rule. In fact, we suggest to all of our diabetic patients that they visually examine their feet nightly for signs that something is out of the ordinary. That's because they often can't feel if there is anything wrong.

However, a once rare condition is becoming alarmingly more common among diabetics – a condition known as *Charcot Foot*.

Unfortunately, very few doctors (other than podiatrists, of course) know about or have any experience with this condition, so diagnosis and treatment may not occur until the condition is in its latter stages.

Charcot foot is a progressive degenerative condition that affects the joints in the feet. Diabetic nerve damage, also called *neuropathy*, reduces the ability to feel sensations in the feet, including pain.

Because of this, a person with Charcot might not even realize that anything is

wrong until he or she starts to notice symptoms, such as:

- Instability or dislocation of joints in the mid or forefoot
- Redness
- Heat
- Foot and ankle swelling
- Misalignment of the bones that form the joint
- Deformity that develops when the arch of the foot starts to collapse

Charcot foot can lead to even more serious complications, including massive deformity, ulcers, amputation, and even death.

Primary care doctors may notice the swelling of the foot and diagnose infection, without any further testing, such as x-rays, to examine the joints in the foot.

With the increase in the number of people being diagnosed with diabetes, concern about the rise in the number of patients diagnosed with Charcot foot is certainly justified.

Initial treatment requires complete immobilization of the foot to stabilize it.

The patient may require a cast or brace and crutches or a wheel chair. After the acute stage is over, special orthotics may be necessary.



Charcot foot can lead to severe complications, if left untreated.

If you are diabetic, please be sure to check your feet every night. Don't put yourself in situations that can cause trauma to the feet.

If you notice any type of swelling or feel heat on one of your feet, it is important that you take action immediately. Delay could be serious and can make all the difference in the severity of treatment options and likely outcomes.

And remember, we are always available to answer any of your questions or concerns.

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*Quote of the
Month...*

**“No one regards
what is before
his feet; we all
gaze
at the stars.”**

Quintus Ennius

About Our Practice

Podiatric Medicine and Surgery is a medical specialty that deals with conditions of the foot and ankle.

Podiatric physicians, who are sometimes called foot doctors or foot and ankle surgeons, treat many conditions of the foot and ankle, including sprains, fractures and other trauma, calluses, plantar warts, bunions, ingrown toe nails, and diabetic foot problems.

The foot and ankle are the foundation of your entire body. Since your entire upper body rests on your feet, it is essential to maintain a proper base of support.

Therefore, it is imperative that you take the necessary steps to insure that the foot and ankle are always in their optimal corrected alignment. Keeping a

“leg up” on any problems or symptoms you may notice helps to insure that you have a more comfortable lifestyle.

Dr. Tomassi is Board Certified by the American Board of Podiatric Orthopaedics & Primary Podiatric Medicine.

He received his podiatric education at the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine and has been in private practice since completing his post-graduate residency in Youngstown, OH.

Dr. Tomassi has held many positions on professional boards and received numerous distinguished awards.

In addition, Dr. Tomassi is extremely involved in charity activities. He provides Christmas dinners each year to needy area families (since 1988) and provides lower extremity screenings

each year to Special Olympics athletes.

Dr. Dan Olson attended Gannon University (Erie, PA) where he received a bachelor’s of science degree. He also received his podiatric education at the Ohio College of Podiatric Medicine in Cleveland.

Dr. Olson is an Associate Member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons and is board qualified by the American Board of Podiatric Surgery.

He is also a member of the American Podiatric Medical Association and the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association in which he serves as secretary of the Erie/Northwest Division.

At **Baycity Associates in Podiatry**, we are confident that we can help you with any foot or ankle challenge you might have and we look forward to serving you!