



Don't Let Halloween Trick Kids' Feet and Ankles

Young kids eagerly anticipate Halloween trick-or-treating. Dressing up, a boatload of sweets at the rainbow's end — what's not to like? But don't let Halloween get the best of their feet and ankles.

Avoid costumes that extend below the middle of their shins. Long robes or dresses can get tangled with feet and result in strains, sprains, and fractures. It's best to avoid costume footwear, which is sometimes bulky and frequently uncomfortable. It can be a tripping hazard and promote blisters. Sneakers are the ticket (even if they don't match the costume).

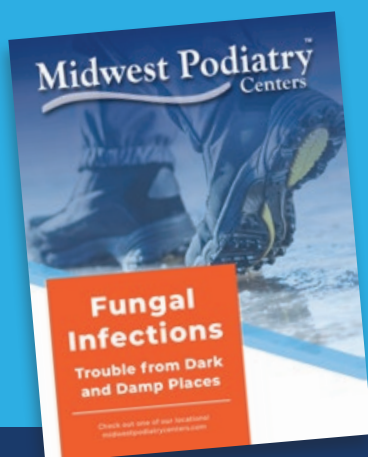
Your trick-or-treaters are best served by wearing synthetic-fiber, moisture-wicking socks, too. Wet feet pave the way for blisters, and late-October evenings might be chilly. Keep extra shoes and socks on hand in case puddles come into play.

Parents should be watchful for untied shoelaces. A lightning-quick tumble can do a number on feet, ankles, knees, and hands. Double knots can help.

Carry a bright flashlight to scope out high curbs, elevated sidewalk, steps, holes or dips in a lawn, slippery leaves, and fallen branches. High visibility is good for passing traffic as well.

After the loot has been gathered, encourage your kids to spread out their candy consumption over the next few weeks. Good dietary habits established early in life can help them to avoid diabetes down the road, a disease with serious implications for the feet and other parts of the body.

A little foot/ankle soreness or fatigue after a long trick-or-treat excursion isn't unusual. However, if discomfort lingers after a couple of days, there may be an injury. Contact our office to schedule a thorough evaluation.



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Staying Healthy During Hunting and Hiking Season

Hunters and hikers who take to the woods and trails sometimes forget how taxing it can be to walk on uneven terrain. Rocks, branches, tree roots, and holes (frequently obscured by fallen leaves); steep hills; and falls from tree stands also make things dicey for feet and ankles.

Common hunting and hiking injuries/conditions include ankle sprains and fractures, Achilles tendon inflammation or ruptures, heel fractures, blisters, and fungal infections. Attention to small details can serve autumn outdoor enthusiasts well:

- Work out prior to hunting/hiking season. You likely won't duplicate the conditions you'll face when hunting or hiking the great outdoors, but every little bit helps.
- Invest in high-quality hiking boots: sturdy; well-constructed; well-insulated; waterproof; excellent tread; with steel or graphite shanks, which offer excellent foot and ankle support, reduce stress and muscle fatigue, and lower the risk of injury. Double-check the insides to make sure there are no rough spots that could be friction points.
- Stay alert to your surrounding environment.
- Pace yourself on hills. Avoid sudden push-offs, and rest when you need to. Your Achilles tendons will benefit, among other muscles and tendons.
- Use a safety harness when employing a tree stand. Most tree stands are positioned 10 to 20 feet in the air. Falls can cause serious damage on many fronts.
- Take extra socks on your outing to help prevent blisters and athlete's foot. Avoid cotton socks, which retain moisture.
- If you hunt alone, let someone know where you'll be and when you expect to return (cell phone service might be spotty). If a foot or ankle injury prevents you from walking, rescue is close at hand.



Mark Your Calendars

- Oct. 3** Oktoberfest ends: Bavaria's Oktoberfest is held mostly in September (began Sept. 17).
- Oct. 4 (sunset)** Yom Kippur: Israeli motorists virtually disappear for a day. Bicyclists pounce.
- Oct. 10** World Mental Health Day
- Oct. 10** Columbus Day: The Vikings were the first Europeans to reach the Americas. Dusted Columbus by 500 years.
- Oct. 13** Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day
- Oct. 22** Fossil Day: Pressure, temperature, and fossils of microscopic organisms (diatoms) led to the formation of "fossil fuels."
- Oct. 31** Halloween: Candy only became a trick-or-treat staple in the 1950s, mostly replacing nuts, fruit, cakes, and coins.

Heel Spurs Got You Howling?

A heel spur is a calcium deposit that builds up and forms a bony protrusion on your heel bone. Although heel spurs alone are not usually painful, they are often associated with plantar fasciitis, which can definitely have you howling (especially with the first steps of the morning)! That's because the inflamed plantar fascia tissues that span the bottom of your foot become contracted at rest, so after a good night's sleep, that first step's a doozy as it stretches the damaged tissues and pulls on your heel—yow!

Here's what you can do to keep heel spurs from haunting you: rest, ice, and anti-inflammatory medication will help to address the primary problem of plantar fasciitis. Stretching exercises and physical therapy can help, too, as can orthotics and a switch to shoes that fit well and offer more cushioning and support. In the rare case that these conservative measures fail to provide relief, surgery can be performed to release the plantar fascia and remove the spur as a very last resort.

If you'd like to learn more, just ask our staff—they're so helpful it's scary!

Pumpkin Carving Pointers

1. Pick a pumpkin that is fresh and has no bruises, a sturdy stem, and a flat bottom.
2. Cut the lid on an angle—not straight up and down—so it doesn't fall inside.
3. Scoop and scrape like crazy! Remove all the insides and thin the interior walls.
4. Tilt the pumpkin upward and carve a face carefully with up and down slices. You can use a serrated knife for detail work.
5. Don't throw your scraps away! You can use them for ears, eyebrows, a tongue, or other fun and creative features.



BONUS secrets courtesy of Good Housekeeping:

- Keep your pumpkin fresh by sealing cut edges with petroleum jelly to lock in moisture.
- Sprinkle a little cinnamon on the lid and the lit candle will make it smell like pumpkin pie!

Lemon Dill Chicken Meatball Soup

Servings: 4; prep time: 5 min.; cook time: 25 min.; total time: 30 min.

This healthy and hearty dinner is the perfect autumn dish ... and a nice antidote for dipping temperatures.

Ingredients

- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 5 c. lower-sodium chicken broth
- 3 c. water
- 1¾ c. bulgur
- 12 oz. ground chicken breast
- ¼ c. finely chopped fresh dill
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest
- Salt
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper

Directions

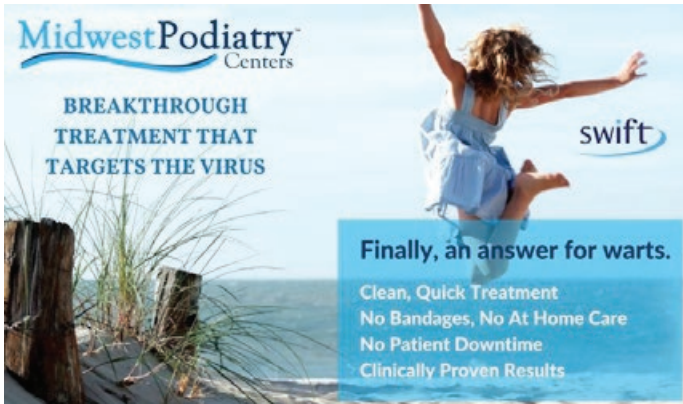
1. In 6- to 7-quart saucepot on medium, cook carrots, celery, and onion in olive oil for 10 minutes, stirring. Add chicken broth and water; heat to boiling on high. Stir in bulgur. Reduce heat; simmer 8 to 10 minutes or until bulgur is almost tender.
2. Meanwhile, combine ground chicken breast, dill, lemon zest, and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Form chicken mixture into 1-inch balls; add to simmering soup along with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Cook 6 minutes or until cooked through.

Recipe courtesy of
www.goodhousekeeping.com.

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Growing Pains Are Real!

Sever's disease (a.k.a. calcaneal apophysitis) is inflammation of the heel's growth plate, an area where new bone is developing. This condition — it's not actually a "disease" — typically strikes during kids' growth spurts (ages 8 to 14). It's painful, fairly common, and very treatable.

Heel-bone growth frequently outpaces that of the Achilles tendon. (The heel bone is one of the first bones to reach full adult size.) That makes the Achilles tendon too tight; in turn, it pulls excessively on the heel's growth plate at their attachment point. Since the heel bone is still growing and the growth plate hasn't fully hardened yet, this is a weak area, and inflammation, pain, and swelling can occur.

Repeated running, jumping, and overall pounding can pave the way for Sever's, which means kids who play high-impact sports — especially on hard surfaces — are more vulnerable. Low-impact activities such as swimming and bicycling are kinder to the heel bone. Other potential causes of Sever's include obesity, an already-short Achilles tendon, high or flat arches, excessive pronation, and short-leg syndrome.

Due to heel pain, a child may limp, walk on their toes, or just not seem their normal self when participating in high-energy activities. Persistent discomfort is a cue to call our office. We will review your child's medical history, ask some questions, conduct a thorough exam, and possibly take X-rays to pinpoint the problem, as many conditions can cause heel pain.

Treatment for Sever's will focus on relieving pressure on the heel bone. Rest, an exercise/stretching routine, and shoe inserts or custom orthotic devices typically do the trick. In more severe cases, casting may be recommended for a few weeks.

