

## **A step in the right direction**

*By. R.Bagha, B.Sc. Podiatric Medicine, M.Sc., D.Ch*

I have never heard of a truer saying: “When your feet hurt, you hurt all over: Corn on the cob is fun. Corn on the foot, is not. What is a corn? A corn is a large number of skin cells compressed into a very small area. In extreme cases, a corn can break down to form a wound. There are many types of corns (Neuro-vascular corn, fibrous corn, soft corn), and not all of them are always treated in the same way. Sounds corny, doesn't it?

Wart, I mean, what is a wart? A wart on the foot is known as a plantar wart, caused by a virus. Walking barefoot on frequented wet surfaces, usually public showers and pools, can easily transmit these viruses. Cleaning such surfaces with regular commercial bathroom floor agents will kill these contagious viruses. Many treatment methods are available to treat plantar warts and initial aggressive treatment will prevent the viruses from becoming resistant and will stop their spread. If there has to be warts, I say, let them be on toads. They are probably the only ones who love them and would not care for my treatment.

Can you get rid of ingrown toenails? In many cases, yes. Many treatment methods are now available to rid yourself of this problem. Treatments range from simple to more complex, involving surgery under local anaesthesia. If you don't want to lose your nail completely, a partial nail surgery that maintains aesthetics can also be performed. We have the problem nailed right there!

How about heel pain? Can the heel be healed? Ultrasound therapy, stretching exercises, rest, icing, massage, cortisone injection, laser, extra corporeal shock-wave therapy (shocking isn't it, that there many ways to heal the heel now?) are all valid options. One effective treatment method involves the use of custom made orthotics (shoe insert devices). Orthotics relieve stresses and abnormal joint movements that your foot may be undergoing. A thorough biomechanical examination by your foot specialist (with many years of training specifically on the foot) will reveal what is happening. An average person puts about 700 tons of weight on each foot each day and sometimes wrong devices can have a positive or negative affect on the whole lower limb. Therefore, you want to make sure your practitioner is a well educated foot specialist. Orthotics has been prescribed, in many cases very successfully, for heel spurs, bunions, arch pain, and pain in the ball of the foot, ankle and knee.

Finally, you need to take good care of your feet so that you can keep walking. You already know that walking is the best form of exercise. What you may not know is that in an average lifetime you walk six to eight times around the world! No, I am not pulling your leg.

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