

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

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Courtesy of Asset Health



"I tell my patients flip-flops are like cupcakes. They are great on a limited basis, but you can't have them (or wear them) every day."

Dr. Jacqueline Sutera, New York Podiatrist

The Flip Side of Flip-Flops

Temperatures soar and sidewalks sizzle. In the sweltering heat, shoes come off and flip-flops go on. Originally designed for beaches and pools, the flimsy footwear has turned into an everyday fashion staple. The upside to the flat, open-toe flip-flops is they are easy, breezy and simple.

But the flip side is indeed, well...a flop. The colorful footwear is not so great for the health and wellness of your feet. Podiatrists' offices see a steady stream of patients hobbling in on flip-flops during summer months. That's because if you wear the summer shoes for long spans of time, you risk developing serious foot problems. Thin-soled flip-flops undermine healthy foot biomechanics and can damage your feet, legs, knees, hips and back.

One problem with flip-flops is they force you to grasp them by scrunching your toes to hold them in place. In doing so, your gait is altered as you strain muscles that aren't intended for walking. Flip-flops offer no shock absorption, arch support or heel cushioning, resulting in stress fractures and insole, arch and heel problems. Foot pain, tendonitis and ankle sprains are common due to lack of stability in the shoes. What's more, feet and toes are exposed rather than protected, resulting in lots of stubbed and broken toes. There's yet another issue with the rubber slippers—the yucky factor. A University of Miami study found that one pair of flip-flops were carrying more than 18,000 different types of bacteria. Some of it comes from walking in the shoes on sand, dirt or water, which kicks whatever's on ground up the back of your legs.

And don't even think about wearing flip-flops while driving! They are hazardous behind the wheel because they don't fit tight like a shoe—they can slip off and get stuck under the accelerator or brake pedal. Tragically, three elderly women in upstate New York were killed last year when a woman driving an SUV got an errant flip-flop stuck under her gas pedal. When she tried to free it, her SUV accelerated, plowing into the women on the sidewalk.

Podiatrists often recommend purchasing thick-soled, high-quality flip-flops to play it safe. Doing so didn't help Amy, a Michigan woman whose well-made (\$130) flip-flops not only put her life in jeopardy; her shoes triggered the trifecta of insurance woes. As Amy backed her car out of her garage in March, she leaned out the driver's side door to see if the garage door had fully opened. Her foot slipped off the brake, catching her pricey flip-flop on the gas pedal. Amy's car accelerated in reverse, throwing her from it and running over both her legs. Her car didn't come to a stop until it had demolished the foundation of her home's front porch. As of July, the Frankenmuth woman was continuing to struggle with slowly healing leg injuries, blood clots, and countless medical, auto and homeowner's insurance claims. It will be another year before Amy fully recovers from her injuries.

The lesson is, never wear flip-flops when driving or walking long distances. Wear comfy shoes instead. If you must wear flip-flops, choose thicker soles, which provide more cushion and protection for your feet.

Keep Your Cool in the Heat

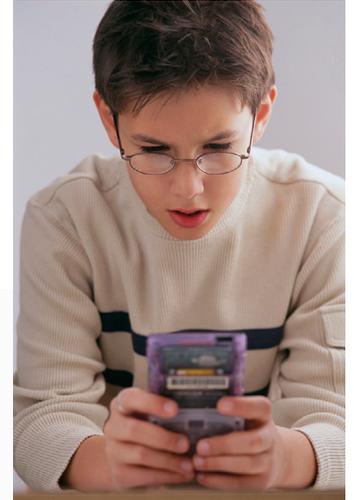
- Close shades, blinds or curtains to reduce incoming heat by as much as 45 percent.
- Place a shallow bowl of ice in front of a fan and catch the breeze.
- Keep a spray bottle of water in the refrigerator and periodically give yourself a good squirt.
- Hang a damp sheet in an open window when the air outside is dry and cooler. Water evaporating from the sheet will cool incoming air.
- Position a fan to blow hot air out of your window at night; it's more effective than a fan blowing in.
- Skip the drying cycle on the dishwasher; leave the door open to let your dishes dry.
- Go barefoot. Sweat evaporating from your feet cools your skin.

Parents Can't Blame Electronics for Couch Potato Kids

A new study shows that parents play a key role in whether their children are active or sedentary. Parenting style influences a child's physical activity even more than the newest electronic gadgets, say researchers at Oregon State University. The study probed kid's activity levels and parenting styles of 200 families.

Researchers found that parenting styles—whether strict but loving or more permissive and less-involved—are associated with a child's physical activity. The study concludes that children with 'neglectful' parents, those who are away from home frequently or spend little time with their kids, are getting at least 30 minutes of extra 'screen time' each day of the week.

"A half an hour each day may not seem like much, but add that up over a week, then a month, and then a year, and you have a big impact," said lead study author David Schary. "One child may be getting up to four hours more active play every week, and this sets the stage for the rest of their life." More troubling to Schary was that all of the children studied between ages 2 to 4 (a stage when movement is essential) are sedentary four to five waking hours every day. The study also confirms what America has known all along—children in this nation continue to be increasingly sedentary. The research was published in the June 21 journal of *Early Childhood Development and Care*.



MRSA Making a Retreat

The number of so-called 'superbug' MRSA infections are declining, according to U.S. health officials. MRSA, an acronym for methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, is a staph bacteria resistant to many antibiotics, including penicillin and amoxicillin.



Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus or MRSA bacteria. Photo credit: Janice Haney Carr/Centers for Disease Control (PHIL)

A government study shows incidence of MRSA in hospitals and communities decreased from 62 to 52 percent between 2006 and 2010.

"These observations, taken together with the results from others showing decreases in the rates of health care-associated infections from MRSA, suggest that broad shifts in the epidemiology of S. aureus infections may be occurring," said Dr. Michael Landrum, an infectious disease specialist who authored the study.

MRSA typically causes skin and soft tissue infections; however, infection can spread to the bloodstream, causing a life-threatening condition called bacteremia. The infection is spread through direct contact with items or surfaces touched by someone with MRSA. Patients having surgery or using IVs are often exposed to MRSA in hospital settings.

Health officials speculate that better infection-control practices may be a contributing factor in the fall of MRSA rates. Between 2005 and 2010, the U.S. Department of Defense studied infectious disease records of more than 9 million families in the military medical system. The study is published in the July 4 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Roasted Red Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 3 pounds red potatoes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup scallions, sliced
- 1 pound bacon, cut and fried
- 4 hard boiled eggs, chopped
- 2 cups light mayonnaise
- olive oil
- salt and pepper

Directions

1. Wash potatoes and cut into bite-size pieces.
2. Shake pieces in plastic bag with 2 T olive oil.
3. Coat non-aluminum cookie sheet lightly with olive oil.
4. Place potatoes on cookie sheet.
5. Roast for 30 minutes in 450° oven, turning potatoes halfway through. Roast until golden.
6. Meanwhile, combine remaining ingredients in large bowl.
7. Mix potatoes with mayonnaise mixture.

May be served warm or cold.