



Two Peas in a Pod

Each foot has two tiny, round sesamoid bones. They are embedded in a tendon at the base of the big-toe joint (unattached to other bones/joints). They act as pulleys to enable the tendon to glide smoothly; help stabilize the joint; aid the big toe in pushing off; and assist with weight bearing, easing pressure on the big-toe joint. They're tiny, but important.

Being bones, sesamoids can be fractured. A quick cut or strong impact as the big toe is pushing off can do it, which prompts immediate pain and swelling.

Longtime overuse can cause a hairline fracture of a sesamoid, too. Constant pounding takes its toll on surrounding tissues as well, producing inflammation (sesamoiditis) and pain. Pain might come and go, though, depending on footwear and activity choices.

Turf toe occurs when the big-toe joint is extended beyond its normal range. The pain is immediate and sharp, accompanied by swelling. Oftentimes the tissues surrounding the sesamoids are the focal point of the pain, but a fracture sometimes occurs as well.

Occasionally, blood flow to a sesamoid bone is compromised, and bone cells begin to die off (avascular necrosis). Each step will remind you that something is wrong.

People most susceptible to sesamoid issues include those who ...

- suddenly and sharply increase their activity levels,
- wear high-heeled shoes,
- have high arches or flat feet,
- overpronate,
- have a bunion, or
- subject their sesamoids to repeated stress (e.g., athletes, dancers).

Fortunately, conservative treatments are highly successful for sesamoiditis. If they fail, a sesamoid may need to be surgically removed.

If you are experiencing foot or ankle pain, schedule an appointment at our office for a thorough evaluation, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatment.



Don't Be a Zombie While Walking

Distracted driving has long been a menace. Texting-while-walking incidents are climbing the ranks, too.

A study conducted by the online journal *Injury Prevention* monitored Seattle, Wash., pedestrians crossing at 20 high-risk intersections at random times. Nearly a third of people had their noses buried in a mobile device as they crossed. Texters in particular spent two more seconds crossing busy intersections than nontexters and were four times more likely to *not* properly survey their landscape, obey traffic signals, or cross at appropriate places.

Our brains are not wired to effectively concentrate on multiple tasks at the same time — we just shift rapidly from one to the other, doing neither with full effectiveness.

When we walk, our brain needs visual information to control the movements of our feet and legs — regulate stride, prompt a little skip or hop when required, calculate how high to lift a knee, etc. Texting interferes with that process, leading to tripping/stumbling; bumping into people or pets; walking into a door, wall, or light pole; tumbling down steps; or becoming a traffic statistic. The results can be cuts, bruises, ankle sprains, fractures ... or worse.

Some simple measures can reduce your risk of injury while walking:

- Put away your cell phone and carefully observe your surroundings, especially when crossing streets, walking along roadways, or navigating parking lots.
- If you wear headphones, keep the volume low enough to be able to hear the sounds of traffic around you.
- If you simply must text or call someone, do it from a safe, stationary position.

If you injure a foot or ankle while walking, give our office a call. If phone use precipitated the incident, that can be your little secret.

Mark Your Calendars

- Oct. 4** Walk to School Day: About 11% of kids in the U.S. walk or bike to school.
- Oct. 9** Columbus Day: "You'll never cross the ocean until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."
— *Christopher Columbus*
- Oct. 12** Farmer's Day: Roughly 97% of U.S. farms are family-owned and -operated.
- Oct. 14** National Dessert Day: Only eight states have an official state dessert; 48 have state insects ... that bugs us!
- Oct. 16** Boss's Day: Around a farm, "boss" can refer to a young cow or calf.
- Oct. 26** Pumpkin Day: Pilgrims' pumpkin pie recipe — pumpkin hollowed out; filled with milk, honey, and spices; then baked.
- Oct. 31** Halloween: Polarizing candy corn was originally called "chicken feed."



Medical Underpinnings of Vampire Mythology

The character Dracula is loosely based on a real-life prince, Vlad the Impaler, a 15th-century Transylvanian infamous for his gruesome ways. However, physical traits and behaviors of Dracula might be better credited to a medical condition.

Porphyria is an inherited blood disorder in which the body produces less heme than normal. Heme is a critical component of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen from the lungs to tissues elsewhere in the body. Symptoms of porphyria have eerie similarities to attributes associated with vampires.

For instance, porphyria causes extreme sensitivity to sunlight. Sun exposure can lead to blistering and painful skin lesions, which may eventually result in scarring and changes in skin pigmentation.

With facial disfigurement a prominent feature of porphyria, it stands to reason that sufferers may be a little gun-shy about standing in front of a mirror. Vampires' inability to see their reflections might be an offshoot.

The urine of those with porphyria is red or brown, which centuries ago gave people the idea that a person must have been drinking blood. Prior to more modern treatments for porphyria, some physicians *did* recommend that patients drink animal blood, thinking that would compensate for their red blood cell deficiency.

Repeated attacks of porphyria can also cause gum recession, exposing more of the teeth and emphasizing the eye teeth — that is, the cuspids or ... fangs.

The sulfur content of garlic can sometimes trigger porphyria attacks and spur considerable pain. Naturally, one would try to avoid it.

It appears highly likely that porphyria plays a supporting role in vampire mythology. The stake through the heart might be all that's missing. That's where Vlad the Impaler comes in.



Halloween Mediterranean Pasta Salad

Servings: 4; prep time: 15 min.

This spooktacular side dish is a fun Halloweenish-themed salad with classic Mediterranean flavors. The black and white pasta is tuxedo orzo, but if you can't find it, any plain orzo will do. (This recipe tastes even better the next day, when the flavors have had a chance to sit and combine. Add the cheese just before serving!)

Ingredients

- 1¼ cup tuxedo orzo
- 1½ orange bell peppers, diced
- ½ cup orange cherry tomatoes, halved
- 12 olives pitted and sliced, black (or kalamata)
- 3 tbsp. red onion, minced
- 3 or 4 tbsp. feta cheese, crumbled
- ¼ cup lemon juice, roughly half a lemon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp. honey mustard
- pinch each of salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling, salted water for 7-8 minutes until cooked but still slightly firm.
2. Drain pasta and rinse under cold water to cool it down. Be sure it is drained well.
3. Combine the lemon juice, olive oil, honey mustard, and salt and pepper in a jar, and shake to combine.
4. Add to the pasta and stir. Add the remainder of the ingredients, except for the feta cheese, and mix to combine.
5. Cover and refrigerate for 20 minutes or until ready to use. Add feta just before serving.

Recipe courtesy of saltwaterdaughters.com.



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Avoid Halloween Trauma to Feet and Ankles



At Halloween, young candy marauders need healthy feet and ankles to carry out their mission. Here are a few ways parents can assist them.

Avoid novelty footwear with costumes. Novelty footwear is typically made of cheap, flimsy materials that provide no foot support. In addition, the footwear may be clunky and elevate the risk of tripping. Have your child wear sneakers instead. Clashing a bit with the costume is a small price to pay. A firm "no" to high heels as well. If not sneakers, something comfortable, stable, and flat will suffice.

A costume's length should not reach the feet or drag behind your trick-or-treater. Your child or someone else might step on the lengthy garb and cause a tumble. Also, masks should not impair vision. Clear vision is vital for noting steps, curbs, raised sidewalk, and other potential hazards.

Don't allow kids to take shortcuts through neighboring yards to reach front doors. Stick to paved walkways. Holes, objects in the yard, moisture on the grass, and slopes are all recipes for slips, stumbles, or falls — and strains, sprains, or fractures, especially during dusk or nighttime hours.

Speaking of which, stay in well-lit areas. Take a flashlight for dimly lit sections; even a glow stick is better than nothing.

Shoelace checks throughout the evening are in order, too. A kid might not even notice untied laces due to all the excitement. If there's a nip in the air, wearing socks made of merino wool can help with warmth and moisture wicking to keep feet dry.

If your child (or you!) comes out of Halloween with lingering discomfort in their feet or ankles, contact our office to find relief.