



HEALTH AWARENESS

Foot Fracture Often Overlooked

(NAPSA)—Raymond Rapiere wasn't like a lot of people. He knew his foot was broken.

Raymond was working on his computer one Saturday morning when his wife opened a door to step outside their North Carolina home. But she forgot their burglar alarm was activated. The siren blared, and Raymond jumped up to turn it off. His left foot slipped and shot forward under the desk. It slammed into the corner. The pain was immediate and intense.

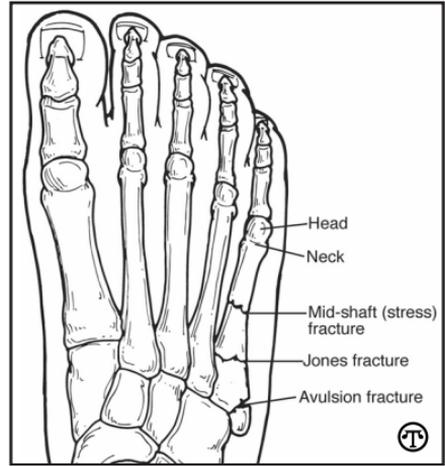
"Darn right it hurt!" the 70-year-old retiree said.

Monday morning, he phoned the foot and ankle surgeon he sees for diabetes care. Several hours later, Raymond found himself in the examining room of Matthew Dairman, DPM, FACFAS. Dairman diagnosed a fifth metatarsal fracture, which is a break in the long bone on the outside of the foot that connects to the little toe.

Many people break the same foot bone as Raymond but don't realize they're injured. Not all fifth metatarsal fractures are as sudden and painful as his experience. The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS) says people who feel pain on the outside of their foot should seek prompt treatment. Walking on or failing to treat a fractured fifth metatarsal can lead to complications including bone deformities, failure to heal, arthritis and chronic pain.

According to the ACFAS consumer Web site FootPhysicians.com, symptoms of a fractured fifth metatarsal include pain, swelling and tenderness, difficulty walking and occasional bruising.

Raymond suffered an avulsion fracture. This happens when the ankle rolls inward, as during an ankle sprain. Avulsion fractures



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are often overlooked when they occur with an ankle sprain.

Three days after he was diagnosed, Raymond went to a local hospital where Dairman made a small incision and inserted a screw to keep the broken section of bone stable while it heals. The procedure took 20 minutes.

Pain on the outside of the foot is not normal. Anyone who has symptoms of a fifth metatarsal fracture should see a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible for proper diagnosis and treatment. If you cannot see a physician immediately, use rest, ice, compression and elevation to control the pain.

Raymond suffers diabetes, so his fracture will take a little longer to heal. Dairman has him wear a cast boot—Raymond calls it his "space boot"—and recommends he avoid walking. But Raymond can still drive.

"Fortunately it was my left foot and not my right foot," Raymond says, "and my vehicle's an automatic."