

# YOUR LAWN



## How To Avoid Lawn Mower Mishaps

(NAPSA)—Homeowners' yards could become "toe-away" zones if they're not careful when operating rotary-blade lawn mowers according to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

Each year, some 25,000 Americans sustain injuries from power mowers, according to reports issued by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. "The blades whirl at 3,000 revolutions per minute and produce three times the kinetic energy of a .357 handgun. Yet we see patients who have been hurt while operating a mower barefoot!" said James Thomas, DPM, FACFAS, a podiatric foot and ankle surgeon at the University of Alabama Birmingham.

If a mower accident occurs, immediate treatment is necessary to flush the wound thoroughly and apply antibiotics to prevent infection, says Dr. Thomas, who is an ACFAS Fellow. Superficial wounds can be treated on an outpatient basis, but more serious injuries usually require surgical intervention to repair tendon damage, deep clean the wound and suture it. Tendons severed in lawn mower accidents generally can be re-attached unless toes have been amputated.

Thomas said children under the age of 14 and adults over age 44 are more likely to be injured from mowers than others. He advises anyone who operates a power mower to take a few simple precautions:

- Don't mow a wet lawn. Losing control from slipping on rain-soaked grass is the leading cause of foot injuries caused by power mowers.
- Wear heavy shoes or work boots when mowing—not sneakers or sandals.
- Mow slowly across slopes, not up and down.



**To prevent accidents, never mow a wet lawn.**

- Never pull a running mower backward.
- Keep the clip bag attached when operating a power mower to prevent projectile injuries.
- Use a mower with a release mechanism on the handle that automatically shuts it off when the hands let go.
- Always keep children away from the lawn when mowing.

For free brochures on a wide range of topics regarding foot and ankle problems/conditions and to locate a podiatric surgeon in your area, call ACFAS toll free at 1-888-THE FEET or visit the College's Web site, [www.acfas.org](http://www.acfas.org).

The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons is the professional organization for podiatric foot and ankle surgeons, doctors of podiatric medicine (DPM) who are graduates of four-year podiatric medical colleges and have completed surgical residencies. The organization is dedicated to developing surgical standards for the care of the foot and ankle, sponsoring research, and providing continuing education for its members.