

Tune Up Your Feet

(NAPSA)—As active adults begin shopping for sandals, embarrassing and uncomfortable foot problems can take center stage. Dry cracking heels, corns and calluses may mean it's time for some foot care before donning new foot ware.

Corns and calluses are the most common conditions on the skin of the foot. A corn, which is a thickening of the outer layer of skin, usually occurs on the tops of the toes and in areas with increased pressure or frictional forces. Calluses, which are the same condition on the bottom of the feet, can occur around the back of the heels and are generally due to the lack of elasticity and moisture content of the skin. A dry cracking heel (xerosis) is a condition of thickening and fissuring (cracking) of the skin on the bottom part of the heel.

Like many foot conditions, heel fissures can become more dangerous if they go untreated and become deep or infected. This is especially dangerous for people with diabetes or compromised immune systems. If the problem persists, see your foot doctor.

According to podiatrist Dr. Alan Mauser, a clinical instructor of the Kentucky Podiatry Residency Association, as interviewed for www.webmd.com, "For those heel calluses, one needs to moisturize skin really well. There are some very good prescription moisturizers out there. Additionally, shoes that have a good sturdy heel counter that can hold the heel in place will help."



Cracked heels can be a simple cosmetic problem and a nuisance, but can also lead to serious medical problems.

Over-the-counter items such as an exfoliant cream are also helpful for the prevention of cracked heels. Exfoliants remove dead skin cells on feet, hands and other problem areas, leaving skin feeling smooth and radiant looking. One drugstore classic that has come to the rescue of rough, cracked feet and hands for almost 50 years is Pretty Feet & Hands Rough Skin Remover. You can learn more at www.prettyfeetandhands.com.

Ironically, we want our feet to look soft and smooth during sandal season; however, going barefoot and wearing sandals can cause dry, cracked heels and calluses. Thankfully, many foot conditions can be easily prevented or treated by wearing properly fitting footwear or using the right over-the-counter foot care products.