

# Jerry Grimes, MD

## What problems can occur with summer footwear?

00:06

So when we get into summertime, people start wearing these shoes like sandals or flip flops that provide very little support and no protection to them from the environment. And this change can cause real problems for the feet. When we were young and our feet were really strong. We could get away with this. But as we age and our feet start having problems, flip flops or sandals can certainly not be a good option for people. Now they're fine for short distances laying around the pool, things like that. But for many activities, we need the extra support and protection.

## Why is foot support important?

00:44

When some people developed something called flatfoot deformity, where the muscles in the body are not strong enough to support the arch, and they need that arch support within the shoe to help support it to help their muscles keep the arch healthy, these people will begin to have some achy pain in the arch whenever they walk for any length of time without support.

## Why should people with diabetes be even more cautious with summer footwear?

01:05

People I really worry about are diabetics, diabetic feet are very, very fragile. And especially once they stop being able to feel the bottom of their foot, they can get a rock or a stick in their shoe and they can make a hole in their foot, which can result in an infection that can be life threatening. So it's very, very important that diabetics have enclosed shoes.

## How else can summer damage our feet?

01:29

Now everybody that wears a summer shoe needs to worry about the environment, sun and wind and water can dry out the skin. And we end up with little cracks in our skin that are a portal for bacteria to give us an infection. And in addition, the sun itself can damage the skin just like you can get a sunburn everywhere else, your feet can get sunburned. And so it's really important to use a sunscreen on your feet whenever you go out in these unprotected shoes.

## Why is it important to protect our feet from the sun?

02:01

One of the things that we have to tell people because it's not something we think about is you can get a cancer called melanoma on your feet. And in fact, melanomas on the foot are more dangerous than anywhere else in the body, probably because we don't notice them.

## Why is choosing the right shoe important?

02:17

When humans first started using shoes, the main goal was just to protect us from the world around us and the earliest shoes are simply something like a flip flop. We've evolved to the point that we have shoes for almost every activity. These special purpose shoes do a good job at protecting our feet, we

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should always pick a shoe that matches the activity. And in particular, we should be careful using things like flip flops or sandals. You should never use a shoe like this around any type of moving equipment because the loose straps can catch and that can cause severe injury to the foot. We also want to protect your foot from anything from like a lawnmower being kicked out. Obviously if you put your foot in a lawnmower, most shoes won't protect you from the blade. But a good well structured shoe can provide good protection from anything that is kicked out and strikes your foot.

**Are there sandals or flip-flops that are considered safer?**

03:15

As we approach summer, there's a great desire to go out and in that expose our feet to the world sandals and flip flops. These come in all grades of quality and structure. And for many people the standard flip flop is just a flat piece of foam rubber is just not enough. And so they do have shoes that are available to have arches and straps that can firmly hold your foot in position and provide good support to the foot. If you have problems with achy pain after walking in your sand or your flip flop, that is not a good shoe for you and you should invest in getting a shoe that is better built for you and your feet.