



FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



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Don't Let Foot Pain End Your Hike: 16 Essential First Aid Tips for the Trail

When you're out hiking, you want to protect your most valuable asset—your feet.

No one wants a shortened season due to a foot or ankle problem that could have been easily avoided.

The most common issues that plague hikers are blisters, ankle sprains, and painful, often black toenails. Here are essential first aid tips and tricks every hiker should know about to keep their feet healthy on the trail.

Carry a First Aid Kit For Your Feet When Hiking

- Moleskin
- Tincture of Benzoin (helps make moleskin stick)
- Surgical tape (to use before you hike)
- Blister bandages with pads and gels
- Alcohol wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Chemical cold pack



Inside this Issue:

Foot and Ankle Center photos—2

Patriotic Potato Salad—2

Don't Let Foot Pain End Your Hike (continued)—3

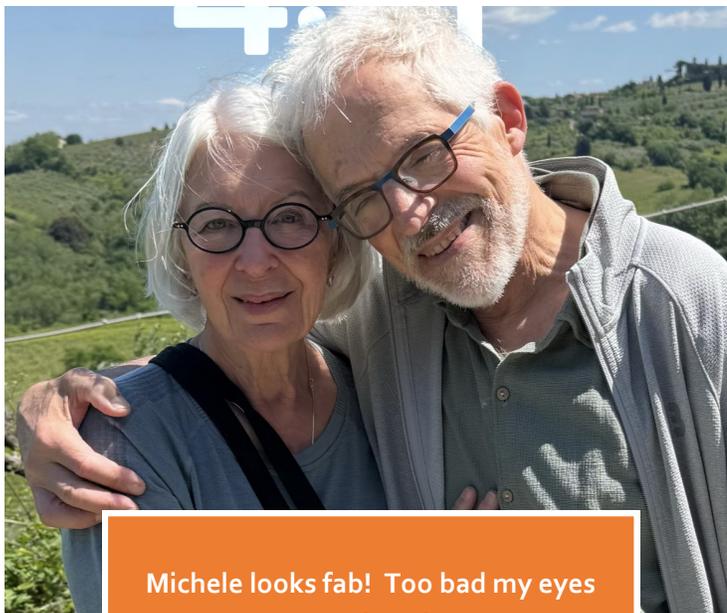
Screen-Free Road Trip Games—4

Blisters: Prevention and Treatment

Blisters remain the most common hiking ailment, yet they're entirely preventable with proper preparation and early intervention. The key is recognizing hot spots—those areas of increased friction and warmth—before they progress to full blisters. Common locations include the heel, ball of the foot, and areas where seams or wrinkles in socks create pressure points.

Prevention starts with proper footwear selection and socks. Choose hiking boots that fit correctly with room for toe movement, especially when feet swell during long hikes. Moisture-wicking synthetic or merino wool socks help reduce friction, while liner socks create a sliding surface that prevents blisters between sock layers.

Continue.....Pg 3



Michele looks fab! Too bad my eyes are closed.



A final spin on Duet for Katie and Henry. We'll miss you!

Patriotic Potato Salad

Perfect for July 4th or anytime this summer!

- 1-1/4 pounds small purple potatoes (about 11), quartered
- 1 pound small Yukon Gold potatoes (about 9), quartered
- 1 pound small red potatoes (about 9), quartered
- 3/4 cup chicken stock
- 4 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1-1/2 teaspoons stone-ground
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 small sweet red pepper, chopped
- 8 green onions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons each minced fresh basil, dill and parsley



1. Place all potatoes in a large pot; add water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cook, uncovered, 10-15 minutes or until tender. Drain; transfer to a large bowl. Drizzle potatoes with chicken stock; toss gently, allowing liquid to absorb.

2. In a small bowl, whisk vinegars mustards, salt and pepper. Gradually whisk in oil until blended. Add vinaigrette, vegetables, and herbs to potato mixture; toss to combine. Serve warm.

To protect areas prone to blistering use mole-skin or surgical tape. When you feel a hot spot developing, stop immediately and apply a blister bandages like 2nd skin.

Cut the protective material larger than the affected area and smooth out any wrinkles that could create new pressure points.

If a blister has already formed, treatment depends on its size and your remaining hiking distance. Small, intact blisters often heal better when left undrained.

However, large, painful blisters that interfere with walking will likely require drainage. Be sure to visit your podiatrist's office to have this done.

Ankle Sprains and Injuries

Ankle sprains represent one of the most serious trail injuries hikers face, often occurring on uneven terrain, loose rocks, or when fatigue affects balance.

The RICE protocol (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) remains the foundation of acute ankle injury treatment. However, recent research suggests early, pain-free movement may be beneficial once initial swelling is controlled.

Stop hiking immediately when an ankle injury occurs and carefully assess the severity.

Use cold water from streams, snow, or chemical cold packs to ice your ankle. Apply cold therapy for 15-20 minutes every 2-3 hours during the first 24-48 hours.

A compression wrap can also be helpful. The wrap should be snug but not tight enough to cause numbness or tingling.

Match your hiking shoes or boots to the level of hiking difficulty to help prevent sprains. To learn more, download our book [“How to Buy Hiking Boots”](#).

How to Buy Hiking Boots
to Prevent
Plantar Fasciitis



While this book was originally written for patients with plantar fasciitis, it's helpful for any hiker.

Black, Loose, and Painful Toenails

Toenail injuries are common for hikers, especially on long descents when toes repeatedly hit the front of boots. The classic “black toenail” (subungual

hematoma)

happens when blood collects under the nail from repeated trauma or a hard impact. Though it

can look alarming, most toenail injuries are manageable on the trail.



You may feel pressure, throbbing, or notice dark discoloration. If caught early, relieving the pressure can ease pain and help save the nail. Once home, see a podiatrist who can safely drain the blood.

If a toenail starts coming off, don't pull it. A podiatrist should remove it in a sterile setting to prevent infection.

Prevention is key. Wear boots with enough toe room, especially when feet swell during long hikes. Trim nails straight across — long enough to protect the nail bed but short enough to avoid pressure. Toe protectors or gel caps can help vulnerable nails. Use lacing techniques to keep feet from sliding forward.

If a toenail loosens, resist pulling it off. Trim sharp edges and tape it down to protect the sensitive nail bed.

Puncture wounds need careful attention, as they can drive bacteria deep into tissue. Clean the surface gently, watch for infection, and consider early evacuation if caused by a dirty object.

Screen Free Road Trip Games

Long summer drives don't have to mean hours of staring at devices. These classic games bring families together and make miles fly by without batteries or WiFi.

20 Questions remains the ultimate road trip champion. One person thinks of something while others ask yes-or-no questions to guess what it is. It's surprisingly challenging and gets everyone thinking creatively.

The Alphabet Game has passengers searching for letters A through Z on road signs, license plates, and billboards. Make it competitive by racing to finish first, or collaborative by working together.

Storytelling Relay builds epic tales as each person adds a couple of sentences before passing to the next storyteller. Stories often take wonderfully unexpected turns.

License Plate Bingo challenges riders to spot plates from different states. Create a checklist beforehand or see who can find the most unique ones.

Alphabet Categories choose any category and then challenge your car mates to come up with something in that category for every letter of the alphabet, starting with a. e.g. Flowers-aster, bachelor button, etc.

Table Topics a backbone of any Toastmaster meeting, ask questions (the wilder the better) and then call on someone to speak for at least one minute. Eg. If you could take anything with you on a desert island, what would it be and why.

These games cost nothing but create priceless memories that last long after the journey ends.

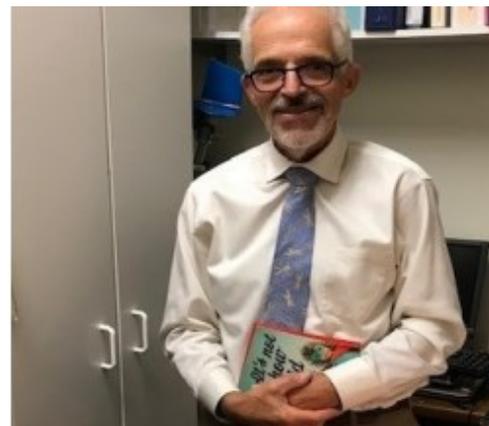


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—Dr. Rion Berg



To make an appointment, call us at 206-368-7000.

