



A Bump in the Road

Sometimes feet and ankles are home to ganglion cysts, fluid-filled lumps that form along tendons or joints. The good news is that ganglion cysts are not cancerous. Some might cause discomfort and put a crimp on your everyday routine, while others are completely painless.

Ganglion cysts can form anywhere on the foot or ankle, but the top of the foot is the most frequent location. Women ages 20 to 40 deal with them the most.


Symptoms include:

- A visible lump that can range from pea size to golf-ball size if left untended.
- Numbness, tingling, or burning sensation if the cyst exerts pressure on a nerve.
- Tenderness or a dull or throbbing pain if the cyst pushes against a tendon or ligament.
- Muscle weakness.
- Difficulty wearing shoes or walking.

The cause of ganglion cysts isn't crystal clear, but repetitive stress, acute trauma, and irritation of a tendon or ligament seem to be associated with them. Other risk factors include age and gender (see above), a past tendon or joint injury, a prior ganglion cyst, and arthritis.

Never self-treat a ganglion cyst; it can lead to soft-tissue damage and/or infection. Don't ignore a lump either. It might just be a ganglion cyst, but it might be something else too. Visit our office for an accurate diagnosis.

Ganglion cysts that don't cause discomfort typically won't require treatment. If they do impact your quality of life, we can utilize a brace or splint to relieve pressure, or drain the fluid via a needle (aspiration). If conservative measures fail, outpatient surgery may be necessary. Be advised that ganglion cysts are persistent; up to 40% return after a few months or years.



Baby's Feet and Ankles — Year One

A baby's overall health is of prime importance for parents, but some aspects get glossed over — such as their feet and ankles. Parents can help their child by staying watchful for the following:

- Scrunched or cramped-looking toes.
- Slow toenail growth or perhaps none at all.
- Discoloration of toenails or skin.
- Swelling or decreased mobility of the ankles or feet.
- Your baby's feet do not respond to touch, or your child seems agitated if anything touches their feet.

Monitoring your baby's feet and ankles can pay dividends down the road, as some foot/ankle issues experienced later in life have their origins in infancy.

It's also important that your baby's feet not be constricted. There is no need for shoes or booties indoors; they inhibit a baby's foot growth and development. Lying uncovered is beneficial for your baby. It allows them to kick and perform other related motions that prepare them for weightbearing.

When a child is ready to walk, they'll walk. A normal walking age varies greatly, typically from 10 to 18 months. Parents can "encourage" walking by providing a safe environment for their child; allowing for plenty of playtime, which can help their baby build muscle strength and balance through crawling and pulling themselves up to a standing position; and avoiding a baby walker, which can delay walking and lead to injuries.

Once walking, a child should walk barefoot indoors to develop grasping action in their toes as well as overall strength. If they're outside, they should wear a pair of shoes that are made of natural ("breathable") materials, lightweight, and flexible.

If anything about your baby's feet or ankles is concerning you, please don't hesitate to give our office a call.



Mark Your Calendars

- Mar. 4** **Mardis Gras:** Mardi Gras parade float riders must wear a mask or paint their face.
- Mar. 5** **Ash Wednesday:** The word "Lent" did not enter Church lexicon until the 11th century.
- Mar. 9** **Daylight Saving Time begins:** The time changes at 2 a.m. instead of midnight as to not interfere with bar/restaurant hours.
- Mar. 17** **St. Patrick's Day:** Until 1970, St. Patrick's Day was considered a religious holiday in Ireland; the pubs were closed!
- Mar. 20** **First day of spring:** Children grow faster during the spring than any other season.
- Mar. 28** **Weed Appreciation Day:** (Not *that* weed!) Hey, weeds produce oxygen, serve as shelter for certain animals, and dandelions are a delightful salad addition.
- Mar. 31** **Bunsen Burner Day:** Everyone waxes nostalgic about high school chemistry class, right?

‘The Last Great Race on Earth’

The Iditarod is a dogsledding competition that begins in Anchorage, Alaska, on the first Saturday in March and ends in Nome. It’s a grueling, approximately 1,000-mile course marked by scenic landscapes, difficult weather conditions, and intense competition.

Since the first Iditarod, held in 1973, dogsled teams have consisted of 12–16 dogs and one musher. To qualify for a successful completion of the race, at least five harnessed dogs are required to cross the finish line. Typically, the race lasts anywhere from eight to 15 days. One 24-hour period of complete rest is required of each team.

The goals of the creators of the Iditarod were to emphasize the prominence of sled dogs as part of Alaskan culture and to achieve “National Historic Trail” status for the Iditarod Trail. The Iditarod Trail was an old mail and supply route serving mining camps, trading posts, and other settlements during Alaska’s Gold Rush era (roughly 1880–1920).

Another cultural dogsled tie-in is the Serum Run of 1925. In 1925, a diphtheria outbreak in a Nome village threatened to wipe out the population of 1,400. Serum was desperately needed to quell the outbreak, but one of Nome’s worst winters prevented air travel (open cockpits) and motor vehicle travel, and the nearest train station was 700 miles away. Dogsleds saved the day, transporting lifesaving serum from the train station to the village while staring down savage winter weather, including –60°F temperatures. Part of the trail the dogsleds navigated overlapped the Iditarod Trail.

Beyond 20th place, \$1,049 is awarded to each Iditarod finisher, which represents the 1,000-mile course plus Alaska being the 49th state of the Union. More than enough to buy plenty of treats for the dogs.



Whole-Wheat Irish Soda Bread

Yield: 2-lb. loaf (12 servings); cook time: 10 min.; additional time: 1 hr. 20 min.; total time: 1 hr. 30 min.

Soda breads are hearty, healthy, and tasty. They’re versatile, too, as the dough can be shaped into scones or a round loaf, depending on the occasion.

Ingredients

- 2 cups whole-wheat flour
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2¼ cups buttermilk

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray, and sprinkle with a little flour.
2. Whisk whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in buttermilk. Using one hand, stir in full circles (starting in the center of the bowl, working toward the outside of the bowl) until all the flour is incorporated. The dough should be soft but not too wet and sticky. When it all comes together, in a matter of seconds, turn it out onto a well-floured surface. Clean the dough off your hand.
3. Pat and roll the dough gently with floury hands, just enough to tidy it up and give it a round shape. Flip over and flatten slightly to about 2 inches. Transfer the loaf to the prepared baking sheet. Mark with a deep cross using a serrated knife, and prick each of the 4 quadrants.
4. Bake the bread for 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 400°F, and continue to bake until the loaf is brown on top and sounds hollow when tapped, 30 to 35 minutes more. Transfer the loaf to a wire rack and let cool for about 30 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of www.eatingwell.com.

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A Spring Return to Outdoor Running

Whether you're a new runner or someone who took a winter hiatus from outdoor running, the following tips can boost your odds of remaining injury-free.

Running shoes shouldn't have more than 300–500 miles on them. Cushioning and shock absorption have deteriorated, and tread is worn down, leaving you susceptible to foot and heel injuries. Spring's a great time for a new pair.

If you're planning to run on natural terrain, first take a walk over the course to scout for potential trouble spots. Overall, natural terrain can be great for the joints, but its unevenness has caused many an ankle sprain. Slippery turf can precipitate damaging falls too.

Do some light stretching and/or walking before you run. Save the more vigorous stretching for your warm-down. When setting out, start off slow and steady. Even if you've been doing some treadmill work over the winter, running outdoors is a different ballgame. Do not attempt to pick up where you left off previously. It's an injury waiting to happen.

If you've done some running research, you might have come across terms like "heel strike," "forefoot strike," and "midfoot strike." Don't worry about changing the position in which your feet strike the ground. Factors such as foot structure, leg length, muscle strength, and more can influence each person's situation. Run with a natural stance and pace that suits you; allow your feet to land how they want to land. Research does not point to any one way being the best.

Finally, if you experience lingering pain in your feet or ankles, and rest and icing do not seem to be helping, schedule an appointment with our office before it gets worse.

