

Hypertension Casts a Wide Net

According to the American Heart Association, over 100 million Americans have high blood pressure, or hypertension. Hypertension places enormous strain on the heart and blood vessels and is a major contributor to heart attacks and strokes. Prior to that point, issues can crop up in the lower extremities.

Damaged blood vessels can lead to plaque buildup and narrowed vessels throughout the body — with lower legs and feet, it's known as peripheral vascular disease (PVD). When circulation is impaired, the lower extremities don't receive proper blood flow and consequences follow. Some symptoms include:

- Cramping, especially while exercising
- Changes in foot color
- Hair loss on the feet and lower legs
- Chilliness of the feet (even in warm weather)
- Foot numbness or tingling
- Swelling
- Foot sores

Lack of circulation will also compromise healing, and sores will be more vulnerable to infection, possibly leading to amputation. Those with diabetes are 15–20 times more vulnerable to PVD and twice as likely to develop hypertension.

Hypertension can be combatted by maintaining a healthy weight. Daily exercise in and of itself is greatly beneficial, even if it doesn't result in shedding extra pounds!

A healthy diet consisting of plenty of fresh fruits and veggies, grains, and proteins and which reduces the intake of added sugars and carbs will serve you well. So will proper sleep, reducing stress, and quitting smoking(!). **And schedule an annual exam with your primary care physician.** If they prescribe medication, use as directed.

If you experience any of the above-mentioned foot/lower-leg symptoms, contact our office. We can conduct non-invasive tests to measure your lower-extremity circulation and coordinate with your primary care physician to get your hypertension under control and spare your feet from collateral damage.



Surgeries for That Bony ‘Bump’

Over time, pressure on the big toe may cause it to lean toward the second toe. The bones, tendons, and ligaments of the big-toe joint eventually become misaligned, and a bony “bump” develops — a bunion.

If a bunion is addressed early, surgery is seldom required. If it’s ignored, the pain and deformity will only worsen, increasing the odds that surgery will be the only viable option to alleviate the discomfort.

The following are three common and effective surgical techniques for treating bunions today:

Minimally invasive bunionectomy (mild to moderate bunion): This surgery incorporates multiple small incisions instead of one long one. A burr is used to cut the first metatarsal bone and file down the bump, after which the bones can be repositioned into proper alignment with the assistance of screws. Smaller incisions mean less pain and swelling, reduced risk of complications, and a quicker recovery.

Osteotomy (moderate): This procedure involves a V-shaped cut at the head of the first metatarsal bone, just behind the big-toe joint, and filing down the bump. This cut enables the surgeon to shift the position of the first metatarsal bone into proper alignment, with the aid of some “hardware.” Some weight-bearing is frequently immediate; wearing regular shoes is typically achievable in 4–6 weeks.

Arthrodesis (severe, with arthritis): Also known as fusion surgery, damaged joint tissue and tips of bones are removed, plates or screws hold the bones in place, and in time the bones heal and fuse (to reduce joint movement that causes pain).

If anything is amiss in your foot or ankle, it pays to see us sooner rather than later. Give us a call today.

Mark Your Calendars

- May 4** Kentucky Derby: Following a circuit of 35 races (U.S. and world), the 20 top-scoring horses qualify.
- May 5** Cinco de Mayo: Originated in Mexico but is not widely celebrated there.
- May 11** National Train Day: Longest U.S. freight train — 3.4 miles (296 container cars; 9 locomotives)!
- May 12** Mother’s Day: Original meaning of Mother’s Day carnations ... red, the recipient’s mom is alive; white, deceased.
- May 22** Buy a Musical Instrument Day: Top-3 instruments in U.S. — piano (27%); acoustic guitar (20%); violin (19%).
- May 27** Memorial Day: Honoring MIAs and POWs left behind in our nation’s wars, D.C.’s Rolling Thunder is the world’s largest single-day motorcycle event.
- May 28** Hamburger Day: Why do fresh hamburger patties shun press conferences? They don’t like being grilled.



Plumbing the Depths of Swimming Benefits

Swimming isn't just fun and refreshing; it offers a slew of often overlooked benefits.

Swimming contributes to social well-being. Swimmers of all ages take classes together and meet new people. Swim meets are bustling with energy and excitement. Who isn't smiling at pool parties and beach vacations? Oh yeah, swimming has physical benefits, too.

Consistent aerobic exercise reduces the risk of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. Swimming has the added benefit of being a low-impact exercise, sparing the joints. In activities such as running, tennis, or basketball, force exerted through lower-extremity joints can be over five times one's body weight. With water buoyancy, weight-bearing stress on joints is reduced by 90% while swimming! Healthful heart-rate elevation and endorphins released in the brain ("natural high") are additional perks.

Kids who take up swimming improve their endurance, strength, and flexibility, lowering the risk of childhood obesity. If they join a swim team, the skills, dedication, and teamwork they learn are attributes that often carry into adulthood.

Some asthma sufferers find relief in the pool. Sports-induced asthma occurs when the bronchial tubes contract due to a lack of moisture or heat (or both). While swimming, it's typically warm and swimmers are engulfed in moisture. Moisture that's expelled while breathing is quickly replaced.

And pools can be fountains of youth. Regular exercise can increase muscle mass and improve blood and oxygen flow to the brain (enhancing mental fitness), thus slowing down the effects of aging. In addition to improving physical strength, swimming can elevate a person's flexibility, reduce joint inflammation, and improve balance. Jump on in, Ponce de León!



Seafood Pasta

Yield: 3 servings; prep: 15 min.; cook: 15 min.; total: 30 min.

Seafood pasta with easy-to-make tomato pasta sauce. This is a quick and delicious dinner that you can make in one pot in less than 30 minutes.

Ingredients

- 10 oz. spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic (minced)
- 4 oz. shelled and deveined shrimp
- 8 oz. Manila clams
- 4 oz. scallops
- 1 can (28 oz.) whole peeled tomatoes for sauce
- 1 tablespoon chopped Italian basil leaves
- salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon sugar/brown sugar
- chopped Italian parsley (for garnishing)

Directions

1. Cook the spaghetti according to the package instructions. Drain and set aside. Blend the entire can of the whole peeled tomatoes in a blender or food processor. Set aside the sauce.
2. Heat up a skillet on medium heat. Add the olive oil, then add the garlic. Sauté the garlic before adding the shrimp, Manila clams, and scallops. Stir to combine well with the garlic, then add the tomato sauce and basil leaves.
3. Cook the seafood until they are almost done, add salt (to taste) and sugar. Transfer the spaghetti into the skillet; stir to mix well with the sauce. Top with the chopped parsley; serve immediately.

Recipe courtesy of rasamalaysia.com.

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Happy Trails to You!

For some runners, trail running is the ultimate. The added physical challenges, grittiness, basking in the splendor of nature ... it's an appealing combo.

Your feet and ankles are the most important tools in trail running — treat them right. Proper footwear is a good starting point. Choose shoes made specifically for trail running that have sturdy soles and excellent traction. Running surfaces are more unstable, slippery, and dotted with potential hazards such as rocks, mud, tree roots, branches, and leaves. In addition, shoes with rock plates and protective toe caps can ward off injuries due to sharp objects.

Trail-running shoes aren't likely to provide great ankle stability — it's the nature of the beast. However, good ankle supports can reinforce ankles, which are subject to added stresses and torque on the trails. Their benefit is magnified for runners who've suffered prior ankle sprains.

Socks should be moisture-wicking to keep feet dry and comfortable and to prevent blister formation. Avoid cotton socks, which retain moisture. Synthetic fibers or merino wool is best.

Keep your toenails trimmed properly. If they're too long, they'll take a beating; too short, ingrown toenails are a threat. Moderate length is best, and trim straight across — no rounding.

Don't overdo the stretching prior to a run. Keep it light; save the more involved stretching for after the run. Also, ease into your jaunt; don't blast out of the gates at full speed.

If trail running leads to a foot or ankle injury, give our office a call. We can also assist you with shoe selection; orthotics; a stretching regimen; or conduct a gait analysis to spot biomechanical issues that might lead to injury.

