Talking to Your Doctor About Foot Pain

by Ricker Polsdorfer, MD

En Español (Spanish Version)

You have a unique medical history. Therefore, it is essential to talk with your doctor about your personal risk factors and/or your experience with foot pain. By talking openly and regularly with your doctor, you can take an active role in your care.

General Tips for Gathering Information

Here are some tips that will make it easier for you to talk to your doctor:

- Bring someone else with you. It helps to have another person hear what is said and think of questions to ask.
- Write out your questions ahead of time, so you don't forget them.
- Write down the answers you get, and make sure you understand what you are hearing. Ask for clarification, if necessary.
- Don't be afraid to ask your questions or ask where you can find more information about what you are discussing. You have a right to know.

Specific Questions to Ask Your Doctor

About Your Feet and Specific Foot Problem

- What sort of footwear do you recommend for me?
- Is there any such thing as a comfortable shoe that is attractive?
- In my case, what caused the pain I'm having?

About Your Risk of Developing Foot Problems

- Given my anatomy and activities, what are my risks for foot problems, and how can I best prevent trouble?
- Should I see a foot specialist, such as an orthopedic surgeon or a podiatrist?

About Treatment Options

- What treatment options are available for this condition?
- Is there a way I can avoid surgery?
- Should I see a different sort of specialist for this problem?
- Should I check this out with my diabetes doctor?

About Lifestyle Changes

- Is there an activity I should avoid because of my foot condition?
  - Will I be able to return to it later on?
- Do I need a walking aid of some kind?
- How can I prevent further pain?

About Outlook

- Will this progressively limit my activities, or is it only temporary?
- Do I need to be concerned about this condition recurring?

REFERENCES: