Keep Your Feet on the Ground
Proper care for your feet

Put Your Feet Up
The foot is made of 26 bones, 33 joints, and more than 120 ligaments, muscles and nerves. The impact of each step is about 50 percent greater than the person's body weight. The average person takes approximately 10,000 steps per day. Your feet are your body's shock absorbers. When we climb up stairs or steep inclines, we carry approximately four to six times our body weight across our ankle joints.

The Right Foot
It is important to care properly for our feet to prevent pain and injury. Wash your feet daily when you bathe with soap and warm water. Dry your feet thoroughly, especially between your toes to help prevent fungal infections. Use lotion on your feet to prevent cracking but do not put it between your toes. Keep your toenails trimmed properly.

Hit the Nail on the Head
Cut toenails after bathing when they are soft. Cut toenails straight across and use a file to smooth edges. Gently remove calluses with a pumice stone, hindu stone or emery board if your healthcare provider approves. Cuticles are a barrier from bacteria and infection. Do not push them back or trim them behind the margins. Cutting your cuticles is generally not recommended. If you are diabetic, ask your healthcare provider for the proper foot care plan for you. You may need to see a podiatrist for proper foot care.

Put Your Foot Down
If you decide to have a professional pedicure:
- Go to a licensed professional.
- The salon technician should use proper hand hygiene and gloves.
- Metal tools should be heat sterilized. Chemical solutions are not totally effective in killing all the germs.
- Some salon tools cannot be effectively sterilized, like pumice stones or emery boards and should be disposed after each use.
- Plastic liners should be used in whirlpool baths for the highest level of infection prevention.
- Do not get a pedicure if you have an infection or open wounds on your feet or legs. Don’t shave before going in case there are unseen nicks which are susceptible to infection.

Source: Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, May 2012

Back on Your Feet
If you have diabetes, proper foot care is vital to your health. It is important to manage your diabetes well. Inspect your feet daily. Use a mirror or ask someone to help if you are not able to see all areas of your feet. Look for cuts, scrapes, bruises, swelling and sores. If they do not heal normally, call your healthcare provider. Wear proper fitting shoes and socks at all times. Check for objects in your socks and shoes before applying. For proper foot care, follow your healthcare provider’s instructions.

If the Shoe Fits
Choose a shoe that is made for the specific activity. Have a professional measure the length and width of your feet at the end of the day, while standing for best fit. Buy a shoe based on your larger foot’s size. The best shoes support your feet front and back. Look for shoes that are stiff in the middle but bend at the ball of the foot and have proper arch support. Kids are at risk for foot deformities as they grow if they are wearing ill-fitting shoes.

The Wrong Foot
Ill-fitting shoes are a main cause of foot pain and injury. Ultra-high heels put extra stress on the ball of the foot which may lead to:
- Inflammation and pain.
- Bone and nerve damage.
- Hairline fractures.
- Ankle sprains which increase the risk of getting osteoarthritis.
Poor arch support in flat shoes like flip-flops may lead to plantar fasciitis and problems with knees, hips or back.

Your Best Foot Forward
If you’re going to wear high heels, the American Podiatric Association suggests:
- Choose the best-fitting high heels.
- Consider a silicone metatarsal pad for cushion for the ball of your foot. A podiatrist can help you find the correct pad.
- Wear a thicker heal no more than 2 inches high.
- Alternate heel heights, wearing high heels in moderation.
- Choose a shoe with a more gradual slope.
- Wear open-toe heels if you have corns or calluses. Consider seeing a podiatrist to have them removed.