

The Podiatric Foot and Ankle Surgeon

This physician has completed four years of college, four years of Podiatric Medical School and residency in foot and ankle surgery. The educational process covers general medicine with an intense focus on the medical and surgical management of the human foot and ankle. These physicians are now considered to be the foremost authority on the diseases, deformities, and other abnormalities of the foot and ankle. Research and development in the profession has dramatically improved surgical reconstruction of the foot and ankle. Procedures that required five days hospitalization such as bunion surgery are now done on an outpatient basis. Patients are fully ambulatory from the day of the procedure and back in shoes in as little as seven days. Development of absorbable fixation is in part responsible for this advancement. In many cases we no longer use metallic pins and screws in favor of absorbable materials.

The Podiatric Physician has become the lower extremity specialist in the management of wounds, especially diabetic wounds. One of the unfortunate consequences of diabetes, a disease process affecting an ever-enlarging segment of our population is the development of progressive numbness in the feet and legs. This lack of sensation, combined with a structural foot deformity results in ulcers on the feet that can progress to bone infection and the eventual loss of limb so commonly seen in the diabetic population. The Podiatric Physician in conjunction with government officials and Medicare worked to pass "The Therapeutic Shoe Bill" which provides each Medicare beneficiary a pair of shoes specially designed to accept an insole molded to the patient's foot. These shoes and insoles have dramatically reduced the requirement for lower extremity amputations in diabetics. Many Podiatric Physicians have these shoes and inserts available in their offices.

Because the Podiatric Surgeon has digital x-rays in the office, patients can seek care for acute injuries such as ankle fractures, and other trauma of the lower extremities. This advantage avoids long waits in the emergency room and permits evaluation of the patient quickly. The patient may then need to be admitted to the hospital for surgical reduction of the fracture. Podiatric surgeons are trained in the surgical management of ankle fractures as well as other fractures of the lower extremities.

If you are a diabetic or have other problems such as heel pain, joint pain, arthritis, poor circulation, painful corns, calluses, and so many other types of problems the Podiatric Physician and surgeon is the specialist to seek out for help. He or she may save your leg, repair your ankle fracture or just improve your quality of life by alleviating your pain.