



If your hurting feet could talk...



# Tackling Turf Toe

## About the Doctor



Jennifer Keller, DPM

Tagging along with your mom to a doctor appointment could redirect your career path.

That's exactly what happened to Dr. Jennifer Keller while an undergraduate in biochemistry at Virginia Tech. Her mom's podiatrist served as a mentor helping guide the decision to become a podiatrist. After obtaining her Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree at NYCPM, Dr. Keller completed a foot and ankle surgical residency at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore, MD. Away from the office, Dr. Keller enjoys time with her children, horses, dogs and cats. While born a Yankee in NY, she has adapted well to life in Botetourt County.

## Get Social w/Us



Spring sports are in full swing, and that means there's a whole lot of running, jumping, and kicking going on. Of course, when participating in sports, injuries can happen, and turf toe is a common one. Although it is often associated with turf fields and football players, this sprain of the ligaments surrounding the big toe can occur with other sports as well, including the original football, otherwise known as soccer.

This condition is caused by repeated jamming of the big toe and forcefully pushing off of it when stopping and starting, running and jumping, or changing directions suddenly—all things every athlete clearly experiences, especially in sports like soccer. The nature of these movements, combined with athletic cleats and artificial surfaces, can cause the big toe ligaments to become hyperextended or stretched too far.

If you have pain, swelling, and limited movement in your big toe, stop what you're doing and rest. Ice and medication can minimize discomfort and inflammation, and sometimes "buddy taping" (taping the toe to its neighbor) can help keep it stable as it heals.

Unfortunately, turf toe can sideline you for a while, so to avoid an abrupt end of your season, make sure you have properly fitting, appropriate shoes for your sport, and ask us about orthotics that can help provide additional support as well as correct biomechanical issues that could be putting you at risk. Take that, turf toe!

# Ball of Foot Pain? Metatarsalgia Could Be to Blame!



As spring transitions into summer, more and more people are venturing outside and intensifying their exercise routines, but beware—metatarsalgia could sideline you as fast as the weeds are sprouting up in your lawn.

Although it is sometimes caused by ill-fitting shoes or certain foot abnormalities, this condition often occurs as an overuse injury due to participating in sports that involve a lot of running and jumping. It can also result from a sudden increase in these high-impact activities—yes, we’re talking to all of you weekend warriors!

Typical symptoms include a sharp, aching, or shooting pain in the ball of your foot, and sometimes even a burning sensation or a feeling as if there is something in your shoe. These symptoms worsen with activity, so if you start experiencing pain, the best thing you can do is to stop and smell the newly blooming flowers! Rest is essential for your recovery. Take a load off for a while, or at least opt for lower impact activities like swimming and biking. Try icing the area to help minimize pain and inflammation. You can invest in metatarsal pads or arch supports to ease discomfort, as well, and a simple switch in footwear could also do wonders.

Don’t let metatarsalgia stop you from enjoying the season. Ask our helpful staff for more information so you can stay active the rest of the spring and far into the summer.

## Mark Your Calendars

- May 4** Star Wars Day—May the force be with you
- May 8** Mother’s Day—Thanks Mom!
- May 13** Blame Someone Else Day—don’t look at us
- May 13** The only Friday the 13th of the year—be careful!
- May 23** Lucky Penny Day—too bad it’s after Friday the 13th
- May 25** Tap Dance Day—polish up those old soft shoes
- May 30** Memorial Day—Enjoy the special gift of freedom





# Break out the Barbeque!

In honor of National Barbecue Month, here are some BBQ tips, hot off the grill:

- For moist meat, marinate first, or place a heat-safe pan of water on the grill with it.
- Making kabobs? Parboil carrots and potatoes first since they take longer to cook than other ingredients. BONUS TIP: soak wooden skewers in water before using them so they don't burn.
- Spray some cooking oil on the grill prior to putting the food on to keep it from sticking.
- If you're using charcoal, wait until it turns white before beginning to cook.
- If you can't find your meat thermometer, here's a cool trick: use your right index finger to press on the fleshy area at the base of your left thumb and compare that to how the meat feels.

**Rare:** meat feels how this flesh feels when fingers are extended but relaxed

**Medium:** how it feels when fingers are extended but spread apart

**Well-done:** how it feels with fingers in a fist

Now get out there and start grillin'!

# Let the Sun Shine in!

## The Positive Side of Sunshine

There's a lot of talk about the dangers of the sun's rays and the damage they can cause, but sunshine isn't all bad. Studies have shown that getting regular exposure to sunlight can boost vitamin D levels, which actually improves your mood. Not only that, it also builds your bone strength, lowers your blood pressure, and even helps you sleep better at night!

That's because when you catch a moderate amount of rays, it triggers your brain to release a hormone called serotonin into your body, which is associated with making you feel happy, calm, and focused. Of course the key phrase there is "a moderate amount." It's important not to overdo it and stay in the sun too long. Always wear sunscreen (don't forget your feet!), avoid midday rays, and wear a hat and other protective clothing. Then, you can take advantage of the sun's benefits, without getting burned.

So, go ahead, get outside, and enjoy the day. Sunshine isn't always dangerous and damaging—it gives you plenty to smile about, too. Bring on the summer and safely enjoy the sun.

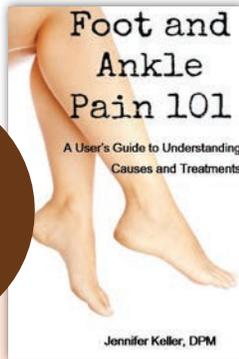


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## Oh, My Aching Joints!

It's Arthritis Awareness Month! Of course, those with this condition are already well aware of the discomfort they're feeling in their joints—even just walking or buttoning up their shirts are painful reminders.

Arthritis comes in several different forms and can occur for a number of reasons. Sometimes it's caused by the wear and tear of aging, other times as a result of infection or injury, and still other culprits include work conditions, genetics, and even excessive weight. However, no matter what type of arthritis you have, or the reason behind it, one thing remains the same—it hurts!

The good news is, there are plenty of things you can do to help minimize your aches and pains. As counterintuitive as it seems, the more you move the less painful your joints will feel. So, while it might be hard to motivate yourself when just the thought of moving hurts, it's important that you exercise regularly. This can also aid in maintaining a healthy weight—another way to keep uncomfortable symptoms at bay. Of course, medication and regular checkups with us will help manage your arthritis, too.

If you are suffering from aching joints that are keeping you from daily activities and things you enjoy doing, ask our caring staff for more helpful tips so you can get back to the life you love!

