

Foot Sense

FOOT AND ANKLE CENTER OF LAKE CITY



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5 Painful Foot Conditions We Can Treat Via Telemedicine

Despite current concerns about Covid-19, most of us are getting outside. We're soaking up the sun while gardening or by walking and running in our neighborhoods. Some of us are also frequenting parks and golf courses, now that those are open as of May 1st.

With more physical activity comes foot pain. You may be wondering if you need to come into the office to get your particular foot condition evaluated and treated. The answer is, not necessarily. Through the wonders of telemedicine I can listen to you describe the pain you're having, you can show me your feet, and I can watch you walk. Oftentimes these will be sufficient for me to prescribe you a home treatment program and/or write you a prescription you can pick up at your pharmacy. Sometimes we will have the item you need at the office. You can pay for these over the phone and then pick them at the door.

The most common conditions I'm treating via telemedicine are: heel pain, ingrown toenails, cracked heels, and broken toes. Here's how (over)

Shrimp Ceviche

A healthy shout out to Cinco de Mayo!

- 1 pound fresh raw shrimp, cleaned and deveined (I used 31-40 count), seasoned with kosher salt to taste
- 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lime juice, plus more if desired
- 2 Roma tomatoes, diced small
- 1 medium avocado, diced into small hunks
- 1 jalapeno pepper, diced very small (remove seeds to make it less spicy; use a serrano chile pepper to make it spicier)
- 1/2 English cucumber, diced small
- 1/2 red onion, sliced into thin strips
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup fresh cilantro, finely minced
- 1 to 2 teaspoons kosher salt, or as desired
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or as desired



Directions

To a large shallow bowl, add the cleaned shrimp, lime juice, season with salt to taste, and place in the fridge for 30 to 60 minutes, or until shrimp are as 'cooked' as desired from the lime juice. While waiting, chop the other ingredients.

To a large bowl add the tomatoes, avocado, jalapeno, cucumber, red onion, cilantro, salt, pepper, and stir to combine. Add the shrimp and lime juice to the bowl with the vegetables, stir to combine, and taste to check for seasoning balance. To bring out more of the flavor add a bit more lime juice and salt. Serve immediately.

Recipe from [Avery Cooks](#)

Heel Pain

Heel pain is usually either plantar fasciitis (bottom of the heel pain) or Achilles tendonitis (back of the heel pain). These conditions are most often brought on by a combination of the following factors: an increase in exercise (walking and running), going barefoot in the house or outside, over pronation (a tendency to pronate or roll your foot inward during movement) and having tight calf muscles.

I've helped many patients resolve their heel pain during a telemedicine call by learning more about their particular issues and by watching them walk.

To resolve your heel pain at home, take the following steps:

- Wear supportive tennis shoes
- Don't go barefoot at home, but instead wear support sandals
- Reduce your inflammation
- Add over-the-counter inserts
- Reduce your calf tightness
- Use a heel lift

To learn more about how to resolve your heel pain at home, review the [blog](#) I wrote and the companion [video](#), "6 Self-Care Tips to Resolve Heel Pain During the Covid-19 Pandemic". The blog contains links to all the products I recommend.

Ingrown Toenail

If you've ever experienced an ingrown toenail you know how painful it can be. Although in most cases I'll need to see you in the office to do minor surgery, we may be able to resolve your issue through a telemedicine call.

First, I'll ask you about the state of your toe. Is it painful, red, swollen, or is there any pus or drainage? Your responses to these questions will help me understand whether your ingrown toenail is infected. I'll also view your toe during our telemedicine call. After my assessment I'll determine whether you can start home treatment or whether you need to come into the office for surgery.

To care for your ingrown nail at home take the following steps:

- Epsom salt soak - soak your toe in a bucket or other container with warm water and ½ cup of Epsom salt for about 15 minutes twice a day.
- Apply a wet to dry dressing – wrap your toe with gauze and secure with tape (make sure you don't tape the gauze to your toe. Saturate the gauze with the Epsom salt soak and let it dry while you wear an open toed shoe. Apply twice daily.
- Wear sandals - wear sandals or another open toed shoe to avoid pressure on the nail.
- Prescription medication – if your toenail is infected, I'll prescribe medication. Use as directed.

Note: If redness, pain, or drainage increase you'll need to make an in office appointment.

Cracked Heels

Walking around barefoot indoors and outside will often lead to dry and cracked heels due to increased pressure on that part of the foot. If your cracks are minor you won't need a telemedicine appointment. However, more severe cracks particularly those that are deep and bleeding will require a telemedicine call.

To care for your cracked heels at home, take the following steps:

Mild to Moderately Cracked Heels

- Moisturize with [Amlactin Foot Repair](#).

More Severe Cracked Heels

- Put moisturizer on before you go to bed and wrap your feet in Saran wrap.
- Purchase gel socks and use for two hours during the day only. Adessa Gel Socks can be purchased over the phone from our office and then picked up at the door.

Note: Patients who have cracked heels and diabetes, wounds, or ulcers will need to be seen at the office due to increased risk of infection.

Broken Toes

Broken toes often occur when we walk around barefoot during the night and slam our foot into a piece of furniture. Most often broken toes won't require an X-ray so you can easily treat this at home.

To care for your broken toe at home, take the following steps:

Use ice, 15 minutes on 15 minutes off.

Buddy splint your toes using one inch wide Coflex bandages starting on your baby toe (5th toe), then tape your 4th, and then tape your 3rd.

One Final Note: Covid Toes

Recently we've been reading about a new phenomenon some people are calling Covid toes. Mostly younger patients with Covid-19 in their 20s and 30s are experiencing a pinkish-red rash that can also turn purple over time. The toes can appear to be frostbitten with skin sores or bumps. This condition can also cause burning in some people. Most people who get this rash are asymptomatic with it disappearing in two to three weeks.

Because patients are asymptomatic the most important thing about this condition is that people who experience it should get tested and isolate themselves from others who could have a much worse case of Covid-19.

If you think you or your child has this condition, I can diagnose it through a telemedicine appointment.

Don't Skimp on Your Physical Activity Right Now

For many of us, the loss of our fitness routines — the social aspects of a regular exercise class, scheduled walks with friends — is one of the stresses imposed by COVID-19 restrictions. Yet maintaining, or possibly increasing, your physical activity level seems even more important than usual in the face of this new coronavirus. While we don't know exactly how fitness and exercise affect this particular virus, we do know that regular physical activity boosts the immune system. One study shows just a single dose of moderate- to high-intensity exercise can bolster the immune system. And a strong immune system can help fight off the effects of viral illnesses.

Also, exercise confers multiple benefits on essentially all of your body's systems, from your muscles, bones, heart, and lungs to your brain. Importantly, it increases insulin sensitivity and reduces stress hormones, which further helps your body fight infections. Significantly, exercise helps people manage anxiety and depression. Even a single bout of exercise can help if you're feeling anxious or depressed, perhaps due to the fear of becoming ill, financial concerns, and worry about the well-being of loved ones. But how can you get enough physical activity in a confined space and without access to your usual exercise machines or classes?

Take a Yoga Class Online

Many of the yoga studios in Seattle are offering classes through Zoom. Two excellent choices are [Two Dog Yoga](#) in Lake City and [8 Limbs Yoga](#).

Take A Fitness Class From the YMCA or Fitness Blender

It's recommended that all adults get at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise a day. [Check out the YMCA](#). They have a variety of health and fitness videos for all ages from dance classes to pilates. You can also check out the programs at [Fitness Blender](#) if you're wanting a bit more variety.

Go Outside

With all the beautiful spring weather it's time to get outside if you feel comfortable doing so. Working in your garden and walking will give you the recommended moderate exercise you need as long as you do it for 30 minutes a day. Not only is it important for your mental and physical health it's also important to get the Vitamin D the sun supplies. Vitamin D helps regulate the immune system, an extremely important thing to do for yourself particular now during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Modified from the Harvard Health Blog, April 23, 2020

Dr. Berg is now available for both telemedicine and some in person appointments. Call us at 206-368-7000.