

Common Podiatry Conditions and Terminology

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Pinnacle Practice Achievement

Abscess: Localized collection of pus in a cavity

Anesthesia: Loss of feeling or sensation induced to permit surgery

Appliances: A mechanical device used to support or realign a part of the body or to improve function (orthotic)

Athlete's Foot (Tinea Pedis): Laymen's terms ("athlete's foot") for a fungus infection of the foot (skin)

Atrophy: A defect or wasting away in the size of a cell, organ, tissue or part.

Bursitis: The inflammation of bursa

Callosity/Callus: A circumscribed thickening of the skin; hypertrophy of the horny layer from friction; pressure, or other irritation/ same as callosity, also used to describe the healing following the fracture of a bone

Chiropody: Term formerly used to describe the study and treatment of feet- still commonly used in other countries

Contracted Toes: Also called hammertoes, toes bent upward at the middle joint

Corn: A horny induration and thickening of the skin, usually found on the toes, that is produced by friction and pressure followed by irritation and pain.

Cyst: Pouch or sac, normal or abnormal, especially one that contains liquid or semisolid material (example: Ganglion cyst).

Diabetes: A metabolic disorder of blood vessels and nerves secondary to the inadequate ability of the pancreas to produce insulin and the body to utilize it in metabolizing glucose.

Edema: Swelling, the presence of abnormally large amount of fluid in the tissue of the body.

Excision: The act of cutting away or taking out tissue, bone, etc.

Exostosis: Bony growth projecting outward from the surface of the bone.

Fascia: Ligamentous tissue, a layer of membrane beneath the skin.

Fissure: Any cleft, crack, or groove, normal or abnormal (heel fissures, grooves or cracks in callus of heels)

Flatfoot: A condition in which one or more of the arches of the foot have flattened out (pes planus).

Fracture: Break in a bone.

Gait: Manner or style of walking

Gangrene: Death of a tissue associated with loss of blood supply followed by bacterial invasion and putrefaction.

Hallux: The great toe or first digit of the foot.

Hallux Rigidus: Painful flexion deformity of the great toe where there is almost complete limitation of motion at the first metatarsalphalangeal joint.

Heloma Durum: Hard Corn

Hydrotherapy: The use of water for therapeutic purposes; usually warm or hot as in a whirlpool bath: also called hydromassage.

Ingrown Nails: Toenails that break through or cut into the skin or tissue around them to cause pain; caused by improper trimming, improper shoes or hose, injury, or congenital disorders.

Metatarsalgia: Term to describe pathology in the metatarsal bones and phalangeal bones of the toes.

Neuroma: A tumor or new growth largely made up of nerve cells and nerve fibers: a tumor growing from a nerve.

Onycho: The combining word form denoting relationship to the nails. This prefix, combined with many suffixes, describes many diseases of the nails.

Example: onychomycosis

Ossification: The formation of bone; the conversion of fibrous tissue or of cartilage into bone.

Osteomyelitis: Inflammation of bone caused by pyogenic (pus-forming) bacteria.

Palliative: Affording relief, but not a cure. Palliative treatment in podiatry provides temporary relief of corns, calluses or nail problems.

Pedis: Latin for foot.

Phlebitis: Inflammation of a vein, characterized by swelling, stiffness and pain in the affected part.

Pronation: The result of a combination of factors in the tarsal and metatarsal area of the foot which lowers the arch and allows the forefoot to splay or turn outward from the midline of the body.

Resection: Removal of bone.

Sprain: A joint injury where the supporting ligaments are stretched or ruptured, but the continuity of the ligaments remains in tact.

Spur: A projecting bony enlargement (heel spur, calcaneal spur, or spur of the os calcis -- Most common in podiatry). A bone protruding from the lower surface of the heel bone.

Subungual Exostosis: Spur bone projected upward under the nail.

Tendon Achilles: The tendon that connects the posterior calf muscles to the heel bone (the strongest tendon in the body).

Tenosynovitis: Inflammation of the tendon and tendon sheath.

Tenotomy: The cutting of a tendon for correction of contracted or hammertoes.

Tumor: Swelling, more often used to describe a mass of new tissue that persists and grows independently of its surrounding structures, and has no physiologic use.

Ulcer: An open sore of the skin or mucous surface of a body organ, characterized by gradual disintegration and necrosis (dying) of tissue.

Unilateral: Single, one side

Verruca: A tumorous growth of the skin caused by a virus (wart)

Plural Verrucae