

Flip-Flops Be Gone! Give Your Feet a Break!

Popular Footwear May Be Hazardous to Your Health



By GOOD MORNING AMERICA, ABC News
Posted: 2007-08-22 16:24:12



They say that beauty comes at a price, and this summer, our feet are the victims. As flip-flops become more popular, so too do the long- and short-term health problems that come with them.

"Flip-flops have singlehandedly caused more problems with people's feet in the last couple years than probably any other type of shoe," said Dr. Rock Positano, a podiatrist at New York's Hospital for Special Surgery.

Lori Geller broke her ankle wearing flip-flops. "The ground was wet, so my foot slipped off and turned."

Geller is certainly not alone.

"I was at the supermarket, and I slipped in my flip-flops on cottage cheese and really hurt myself," said Tiffany Andreade of an embarrassing fall.

These women and others may be heading feet first into a world of short- and long-term foot problems. Positano sees about five to 10 flip-flop related injuries a week -- injuries he believes are a direct result of women wearing flip-flops in place of normal walking shoes.

"The problem with this is absolutely no support & the foot is able to go in any direction it wants to go in, and it directly impairs the ability of the foot to function as a shock absorbing part of the body," Positano explained.

Flip-flops present long-term health problems, too. Laura DePrizio had struggled with a nerve problem in her foot, but she had gotten it under control before this summer.

She couldn't believe her ears when Positano told her the culprit for the return of her problems was her flip-flops.

"It had to be the gym, it had to be the running, it had to be something other than the flip-flop. It just didn't seem that it would be such a problem," DePrizio said.

In addition to aggravating old problems, people with flat feet or high arches can also do long-term, serious damage by wearing flip-flops.

"These foot types normally will predispose a person to developing problems with their tendons with joint stability," Positano said. "And long term there is always the possibility of developing chronic tendinitis or overuse injuries not only in the ankle but also the knee, the hip and the back."

Positano said that in moderation, flip-flops are fine. The problems arise when people wear them for long periods and long distances at a time.

He also warned that it's not safe to wear flip-flops while driving, as they are not anchored to the feet and can get lodged under the gas pedal or brake.

"Basically this is no better than walking on a rubber band," Positano quipped.

Copyright 2007 ABCNEWS.com
2007-05-17 16:07:48