

NORTH AUSTIN

FOOT & ANKLE

INSTITUTE



Feb. 2019

# When Your Feet Feel Aflame

It may be the time of year for passion, but hearts should feel afire—never your feet!

Burning pain in your feet can sometimes be the result of fatigue or an infection (such as athlete's foot). More often, however, it is sign of nerve damage of some sort. Peripheral neuropathy, often as a result of diabetes, can lead to a burning, tingling pain in the feet and toes.

Any type of painful sensation in the feet is not something to stand by on. If you have been experiencing a burning sensation after several days, and it has not improved with self-care, it is time to see us. You should also contact us if the burning is gradually becoming worse, seeming to spread, or starting to mix with numbness.

Call us or emergency care immediately if the burning came on hard and suddenly. While rare, this could be sign that you have been exposed to some kind of toxin.

You should also seek immediate help if the sensation accompanies an open wound that may be infected; especially if you have a history of diabetes.

If peripheral neuropathy is the cause of your burning, we have ways of helping you manage your symptoms to keep your nerves as healthy as possible. If another cause is at play, such as athlete's foot or other form of inflammation, we have effective treatments for those as well!





# Just How Much Trouble Are Heel Spurs?

Heel spurs tend to be blamed as the cause of heel pain quite often, and we think we know why.

When you have pain in your heel after getting up in the morning or just generally placing weight on your feet, it seems quite natural to think it's probably due to a pointy, bony growth happening down there.

Also, "spurs" is fun to say. It's very Western.

While it's true that heel spurs can be a cause of pain, they might not be the source as often as many people think. In fact, a lot of us have heel spurs and would never even know it!

Many heel spurs cause no pain whatsoever, and go undiscovered until an X-ray or other imaging test reveals them—usually when investigating something else!

Heel spurs do also tend to hang out with plantar fasciitis, however—the most common form of heel pain. Plantar fasciitis develops when the thick band of tissue that runs beneath each foot becomes overstretched or stressed, creating small tears and growing inflamed.

The same strains that can cause plantar fasciitis can also coax the calcium buildups that form into heel spurs. However, even cases where both issues are present, the heel spur might not be causing any trouble; it could entirely be the plantar fasciitis.

If you have heel pain, don't be so quick to assume heel spurs. *Do* be quick, however, to let us know about your problem. We can get to the source of the problem and get you on the path to finding relief, whether it's for a heel spur, plantar fasciitis, or another cause altogether.

## Mark Your Calendars

- February 1** National Get Up Day – Celebrate stories of perseverance!
- February 4** National Thank a Mail Carrier Day – And keep your dog leashed.
- February 8** National Kite Flying Day – Watch for kite-eating trees!
- February 14** National Ferris Wheel Day – Take your sweetie on a round.
- February 17** National Random Acts of Kindness Day – The best kind of kindness!
- February 23** National Dog Biscuit Day – To reward your pet for not biting the mail carrier.
- February 24** National Tortilla Chip Day – Can add some salsa if you wish.
- February 28** National Floral Design Day – Why not look a bit flowery?



# Tips for Raising Your “Good Cholesterol”

Not all cholesterol is created equal. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol is considered the “good” form of cholesterol because it helps scrub the more harmful low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol out of your bloodstream.

Avoiding high buildups of LDL in your bloodstream can be a significant help toward avoiding circulation problems that can be harmful to your feet. But when it comes to HDL, people with higher numbers tend to be more likely to avoid heart conditions and strokes.

You should consult with your primary physician before taking any big steps to alter your cholesterol levels, but here are a few general tips for increasing your HDL.

(We doubt most doctors will argue with these.)

- **Become more active.** Increased physical activity increases your HDL while also lowering triglycerides (a type of fat in your body and bloodstream).
- **Avoid trans fats.** They increase LDL while reducing HDL.
- **Stop smoking.** Smoking increases LDL and triglycerides while reducing HDL—especially in women.
- **Have a small amount of alcohol.** Seriously. Moderate use of alcohol in healthy adults has been shown to raise HDL. However, don’t use this as an excuse to start drinking if you don’t normally—and be careful of drinks adding empty calories and more weight to your diet.

Many tips for general well-being will have a good effect on your cholesterol, but it might be harder for some people to benefit more than others based on their genetic makeup and other factors. Monitoring your cholesterol regularly with your primary physician is always recommended.



## Spicy Apricot Glazed Chicken

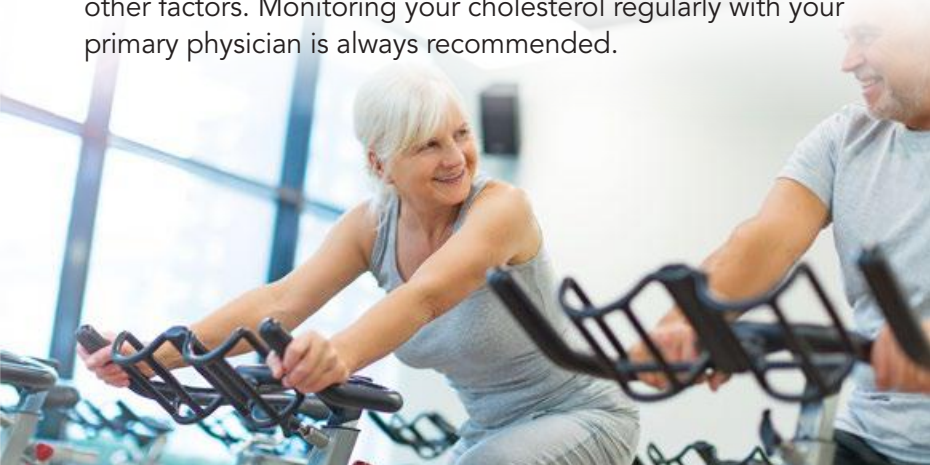
Looking for a spicy *and* sweet dish to match your love for another? Try bringing this chicken to the table!

### Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 4 oz. each)
- 1/3 c. apricot preserves
- 1/4 c. chili sauce
- 1 Tbs. hot mustard
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

### Preparation

- Preheat broiler.
- In a small saucepan, combine the preserves, chili sauce, hot mustard, salt, and pepper. Cook and stir over medium heat until heated through.
- Place chicken in a 15x10 baking pan coated with cooking spray. Broil 3-4 inches from heat for 6-8 minutes on each side, or until a food thermometer reads 165 degrees. Brush occasionally with the preserves mixture during the last 5 minutes of cooking.



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# Think Twice About a Nail Salon or Spa Pedicure

A pedicure—whether given as a gift to another or yourself—can feel like receiving a taste of high life. After all, it's not every day that someone tends to you hand and foot (literally)!

But before you head off to the salon or spa, it always pays to be careful that your trip doesn't end up becoming a regret. Not all places operate the same, and some can engage in practices that might leave you contracting a fungal nail infection or other nasty problem.

A pedicure conducted by a medical professional is always best. Barring that, however, here are some tips on what to look for regarding best pedicure practices:

- **Are their tools sanitized?** Make sure that the salon/spa properly sanitizes all their metal tools and uses fresh tools for each and every customer. The best sanitation uses liquid disinfectant (Barbicide or something similar). UV light is sometimes permissible by law for sanitation, but we don't recommend going anywhere that uses only that.
- **Don't be afraid to bring any of your own tools.** Any non-metal tools are for one-customer use only. *Always.* If you have your own files and other equipment that you can sterilize at home, you should not feel awkward about bringing them in asking that they be used. If not, the salon or spa may have a kit that will be used only on you.
- **Make sure foot baths are clean.** If a previous customer with an infection has used a foot bath and it's not properly cleaned between customers, your risk of getting what they had rises significantly. Pipeless foot baths are best, and never opt for bubbles or jets. It's very easy for fungus and other nasties to hole up in the machinery that provides that extra bit of lavishment.