

THE PRINE HEALTH PODCAST · EPISODE 5 COMPANION GUIDE

Foot Symptoms You Should Never Ignore

What your feet are quietly telling you about your circulation, your nerves, and your overall health — and when it's time to stop waiting and see a doctor.

Featuring insight from

Dr. David Sands, DPM — Award-Winning Podiatrist, PRINE Health

WHY THIS MATTERS

Your Feet Are Talking. Are You Listening?

It's easy to write off foot pain as "just part of getting older," or to shrug at tingling, swelling, or numbness and assume it'll pass. But your feet are often the first place your body shows signs of much bigger issues — things like diabetes, poor circulation, nerve damage, and inflammation.

Because your feet are the farthest point from your heart and carry some of the smallest blood vessels and nerve endings in your body, they tend to feel the effects of circulation and nerve problems before anywhere else does. That makes them an early warning system — if you know what to look for.

This guide is a companion to Episode 5 of The PRINE Health Podcast, a conversation with award-winning podiatrist Dr. David Sands about the foot symptoms that deserve real attention, what they can mean for your overall health, and how PRINE Health's team-based approach catches problems before they become emergencies.

"Most people don't realize how much the feet can reveal about what's happening throughout the body."

Use this guide as a quick reference — something to keep handy, share with someone you love, or revisit the next time you catch yourself thinking, "it's probably nothing."

8 Foot Symptoms Worth Paying Attention To

None of these symptoms are things to panic over on their own. But each one is worth noticing — especially if it lingers, worsens, or shows up alongside another symptom on this list.

01

Numbness

A loss of feeling in the toes or feet can point to nerve damage (neuropathy) — often one of the earliest signs of diabetes.

02

Tingling

That "pins and needles" feeling shares the same nerve pathways as numbness and is frequently one of the first symptoms people notice.

03

Burning

A burning sensation, especially at night, is a classic sign of nerve irritation and is commonly linked to neuropathy.

04

Swelling

Persistent swelling can signal circulation issues, vein problems, or inflammation that needs a closer look.

05

Wounds That Won't Heal

A cut or sore that lingers is a major red flag for poor circulation and diabetes, and can lead to serious complications if left untreated.

06

Color Changes

Skin that turns pale, red, blue, or develops dark patches can be a sign that blood flow to the feet is compromised.

07

Pain

Ongoing or unexplained pain is not something to simply accept — it's not just "part of getting older," and it deserves a real answer.

08

Cold Feet

Feet that stay cold regardless of temperature — particularly if only one foot is affected — can point to poor circulation.

From "I'll Keep an Eye on It" to "I Need to See Someone"

A lot of people wait far too long to get a foot symptom checked out. Here's a general guide for when it's time to stop watching and start scheduling.

See a doctor sooner if a symptom...

- Has lasted more than a few days without improving
- Is getting worse, spreading, or becoming more frequent
- Shows up on only one foot, or one side of the body
- Comes with a wound, sore, or break in the skin
- Is paired with another symptom on this list — like numbness plus a color change
- Interferes with sleep, walking, or daily activity
- Is new for you, or feels different from anything you've experienced before

The Diabetes Connection

One of the most common and important conversations in podiatry is about diabetic neuropathy — nerve damage caused by prolonged high blood sugar, most often affecting the feet first. It can show up as numbness, tingling, or burning, and because it dulls sensation, it also makes it easier to miss injuries that would otherwise be obvious.

Here's what surprises a lot of people: foot symptoms can appear *before* someone is ever diagnosed with diabetes. For many patients, a visit to the podiatrist is what leads to catching the bigger picture early.

Circulation, and the Myth of "It's Just Age"

The Circulation Connection

Because the feet sit farthest from the heart, they're often where circulation problems show up first. Reduced blood flow means tissue gets less oxygen and fewer nutrients, which is part of why wounds on the feet are slower to heal and more prone to complications.

Early, easy-to-miss signs of poor circulation include:

- ✓ Feet that are cold to the touch, even in a warm room
- ✓ Cuts or sores that take longer than usual to heal
- ✓ Leg or calf cramping that comes on with walking and eases with rest
- ✓ Shiny skin or noticeable hair loss on the lower legs and feet
- ✓ A weak or hard-to-find pulse in the foot

Myth: "Foot Pain Is Just Part of Getting Older"

It's one of the most common things podiatrists hear — and one of the most important to push back on. Aging does change the feet over time, but ongoing pain is not something you're supposed to just live with. Persistent pain is a signal, not a life sentence, and it's almost always worth a conversation with a specialist rather than a shrug.

TAKE ACTION

Protecting Your Feet, Starting Today

Foot health doesn't require anything complicated — just a little consistency.

Everyday Habits

- ✓ Check your feet regularly for cuts, sores, color changes, or swelling — especially the soles and between toes
- ✓ Wear supportive, well-fitting shoes rather than pushing through discomfort
- ✓ Keep skin moisturized to prevent cracking, but keep the area between toes dry
- ✓ Trim toenails carefully and treat infections (like fungus) early
- ✓ Stay active — movement supports healthy circulation
- ✓ Manage chronic conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, which all affect foot health

How Often to Get Evaluated

A general rule of thumb is an annual foot evaluation for most adults — and more frequent checkups for anyone managing diabetes, circulation problems, or nerve-related symptoms.

A yearly exam is a small time investment that can catch a developing problem months or years before it becomes serious — which is exactly why early evaluation matters so much.

Why a Connected Care Team Matters

The body is connected — and your care should be too. A foot symptom is sometimes just a foot symptom. But sometimes it's the first clue to something happening elsewhere in the body, and that's exactly where a multidisciplinary team makes the difference.

At PRINE Health, podiatry doesn't work in isolation. When something in an exam suggests a bigger picture — a circulation concern, an early sign of diabetes, or a nerve issue — that observation can be connected directly to the specialists who treat it.

Podiatry

Endocrinology

Vascular Care

Primary Care

Nutrition

Nephrology

That coordination means fewer dead ends, fewer repeated visits explaining your history from scratch, and a much better chance of catching a bigger issue while it's still manageable.

Ready to Get Your Feet Checked?

If anything in this guide sounded familiar — a symptom you've been putting off, a wound that's taking too long to heal, feet that never seem to warm up — it's worth a conversation with a podiatrist.

Call PRINE Health: (516) 951-1110

Visit: prinehealth.com

And don't forget to listen to the full conversation with Dr. David Sands — Episode 5 of The PRINE Health Podcast, wherever you get your podcasts.

This guide is intended for general educational purposes and is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of a qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.