

# FOOT PAIN

Learn what can cause your feet to hurt – and what to do about it.

With 28 bones, 33 joints and the stress of supporting the body, it's not surprising that a lot can go wrong with your feet. Foot pain can result from many causes, including several forms of arthritis, says Carol Frey, MD, an orthopedic surgeon in Manhattan Beach, California. Here are some possible causes and what to do if you experience them. —M.A.D.

## ● HEEL/ANKLE

### **Achilles tendinitis:**

Pain, stiffness and swelling in the Achilles tendon, which runs from the calf to the heel bone, often results from repetitive stress from exercise but may be a symptom of psoriatic arthritis (PsA). **Treatment:** shoe inserts, over-the-counter (OTC) pain relievers, surgery

### **Heel spurs:**

Sharp, bony protrusions that form when the plantar fascia separates from the heel, causing pain. **Treatment:** rest, ice, shoe inserts, anti-inflammatory medications, surgery in some cases

## ● SOLE

### **Plantar fasciitis:**

Pain, inflammation and/or tenderness of the sole of the foot near the heel; caused by tiny tears in the long fibrous ligament along the bottom of the foot. **Treatment:** stretching exercises, arch support, OTC or prescription anti-inflammatory medications

## ● BIG TOE

### **Gout:**

A type of inflammatory arthritis in which excess uric acid in the blood is deposited as crystals into joints; sudden, severe pain and swelling in the joint at the base of the big toe is a common first symptom. **See a doctor** for treatment options.

### **Bunion:**

A painful, bony bump at the side of the base of the big toe. Caused by shoe pressure from the big toe drifting toward the second toe; genetics may also play a role. **Treatment:** roomy shoes, inserts, OTC pain relievers, surgery in some cases

## ● TOES

**Dactylitis:** Pain and inflammation in the tendon that runs the length of one or more toes. Swelling makes the toe look sausage-like, a symptom of PsA. **See a doctor** for treatment options.

**Morton's neuroma:** Burning pain in the ball of the foot caused by thickening of tissue around nerves that lead to the toes. Pain is often accompanied by numbness in toes. **Treatment:** shoe inserts, surgery in some cases

**Hammertoe:** A deformity in the middle joint of a toe that results in it bending downward instead of lying flat; affected joints are often red and swollen. Caused by tight shoes, injury or imbalance of the toe muscles. **Treatment:** roomier shoes, shoe inserts, exercises

