Corns, Calluses and Blisters

Corns and calluses are friction injuries that may be caused by an underlying bony abnormality and are aggravated by pressure against your skin. They are localized areas of keratin (thickened skin) that develop under areas of irritation and stress. Pain and burning are caused by inflamed tissue surrounding the corn or callus.

Pre-existing foot deformities such as enlarged metatarsal heads (bunions) contracted toes and bone spurs may put extra pressure on certain parts of your foot putting you at greater risk to develop a corn or callus. Abnormal pronation (flattening of the foot), rear foot varus (an abnormal fixed position in which the foot is tilted toward the midline of the body) and atrophy of the fat pads on the bottom of the foot also can cause corn and callus formation. A callus can also form when one metatarsal bone (long bones of the foot) is longer or lower than the others, it presses on the skin beneath, forming a callus.

There are different types calluses which develop on the toes and feet. Intractable plantar keratosis or IPK's are usually more painful calluses and have a deep core present which becomes visible when they are debrided.(trimmed). Using an abrasive material only removes the outer surface not the core. Severe corns and

DEBRIDEMENT

calluses may become infected and destroy healthy tissue and should be evaluated and treated professionally. Self treatment is especially dangerous for diabetic patients who have decreased sensations and poor circulation in the lower extremities.

Some tumors can mimic a callus. If a lesion suddenly changes by growing in size, changing in color, ulcerating or has borders becoming irregular consult with your podiatric specialist.

Corns or callus can be removed in the office by debridement or removal of the hyperkeratotic tissue using a specially shaped scalpel blade. However in some cases these lesions have been intractable for years and conservative treatment (palliation - treatment to relieve and afford comfort) has been exhausted and surgical intervention is necessary to correct the underlying problem.

Blisters form when the skin rubs against another surface, causing friction. First, a tear occurs within the upper layers of the skin (the epidermis), forming a space between the layers while leaving the surface intact. Then fluid seeps into the space. If you get a blister, you'll want to relieve your pain, keep the blister from enlarging, and avoid infection. Specific steps depend on the size of the blister and whether or not it is intact. You can treat the vast majority of blisters yourself and need to call a doctor only if blisters become infected, recur frequently, form in unusual locations, are very severe or you are diabetic. Signs of infection include pus draining from the blister, very red or warm skin around the blister, and red streaks leading away from the blister.

The most common cause of blisters are mechanical foot imbalances involving structural or functional abnormalities. if you are bothered by frequent blister formation, consult with your podiatric physician who can determine what type of foot imbalance may be causing the problem.