

Podiatric Medicine is a Healing Art

Doctors of Podiatric Medicine Help Keep Older Patients on Their Feet and Active



The quality of life degenerates rapidly for a person who is unable to move about freely. And, in an era of concern with spiraling healthcare costs, care for a bedridden person is considerably more expensive—whether paid for by the individual, a family, insurance, or the government.

Doctors of podiatric medicine help keep older patients on their feet and active, which is critically important to their overall health.

The complex engineering marvels that keep people mobile—the feet—change as an inevitable effect of aging. Nails get thicker, skin drier and such problems as corns, calluses, arthritis, bunions and hammertoes increase. It is common for the foot's natural cushion to thin out and lose some of its shock absorbing quality.

For healthcare, the aging of American society has been called the most profound demographic change of the 20th century, creating a whole new set of problems.

A podiatric physician's specialized education and training places him or her in the unique position of helping an aging society deal with increasing medical difficulties. And, Medicare records indicate that doctors of podiatric medicine have become the providers of choice for seniors seeking foot care.

Older patients benefit from periodic visits to foot doctors:

- Serious systemic problems—arthritis, diabetes, kidney problems, circulatory disorders, bone conditions, etc.—often are indicated initially by symptoms in the feet and legs.
- Each of the foot joints can be afflicted with arthritis, making feet more susceptible to a painful disease that can disable a person.
- Older men and women may develop osteoporosis, a loss of bone mass that makes them fragile. Once minor incidents—bumping a toe or dropping something on the foot—can lead to a debilitating fracture.
- Of the 2.1 million people 65 and over who have diabetes, nearly 65,000 have diabetic foot disease.

For older Californians, good foot health can be the difference between enjoyment or infirmity, active involvement or debilitating decline.

Keeping California's aging population active longer and more capable of caring for themselves is critical to the State's economic well-being. Good medical foot care by doctors of podiatric medicine is an important part of this equation.

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The message is crystal clear. Doctors of podiatric medicine are extremely well educated and trained in foot and ankle care.

By continuing a long tradition of medical care and constant refinement of knowledge, techniques and procedures, podiatric physicians have been one of the most accomplished—and, yet, most effective—arms of the medical care community.

They believe in fair competition. When patients can freely choose any provider, the best specialists will prevail.

They believe in community involvement, such as a long-standing program that provides free shoes and medical care to the homeless and the Baja Crippled Children's Project, which regularly travels to Central America to correct poor children's foot deformities.



Doctors of podiatric medicine are the only health professionals who share with doctors of medicine and osteopathy and dentistry the legal authority to diagnose, administer treatment by medical and surgical means, and prescribe medications for human.



They are trained to provide multifaceted foot care, including complete medical histories and thorough lower extremity physicals, which include vascular, neurological, dermatological and orthopedic examinations. When indicated, x-rays are taken and laboratory evaluations are made.

Podiatric physicians contribute immensely to the well-being of all Californians. They are of special importance in providing care for the elderly and for those suffering from diabetes or arthritis.

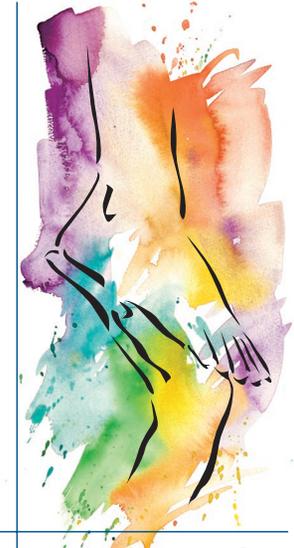
California's doctors of podiatric medicine are proud to continue their historic role of contributing to the health and well-being of the people of the Golden State.

For over 90 years the California Podiatric Medical Association has served the people of California by promoting the science and art of podiatric medicine, protecting the public health, and elevating the standards of medical education.

CPMA has been in the forefront of progress for patients and for podiatric medicine, sponsored strong licensing provisions and more stringent formal and continuing educational requirements. The Association continues to support strong regulatory procedures and high ethical standards.



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CPMA

**CPMA, Helping California's
Doctors of Podiatric Medicine
Keep Californians on Their Feet**

CALIFORNIA PODIATRIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

What is a Podiatrist?



A Podiatrist is the foremost authority and medical specialist of one of the most intricate and complex anatomical structures ever designed - the human foot and ankle.

Marrying the mechanical complexity and precision of a Swiss watch with the structural strength of a cantilever bridge, the human foot is a bioengineering masterpiece. It is a complex marvel of 26 bones (one-quarter of all the bones in the human body), 33 joints and more than 100 ligaments and tendons, all linked and served by a vast network of nerves, muscles, blood vessels, soft tissue and skin, working in unison to provide the support, strength, flexibility and resiliency needed for things most of us take for granted, such as balance, walking, running and jumping. The podiatrist is the medical expert of this wonder of nature.



Examination of children's feet is an integral part of podiatry. Frequently, children have structural imbalance of the feet that may go unrecognized and can lead to other deformities and imbalances within the skeletal system. When detected early, these imbalances of the feet, some of which are related to the bone structure, are treated so that a sturdier foundation can be provided for during later years.

A podiatrist is the only medical specialist educated, trained, licensed, and certified for exclusive treatment of the foot and ankle.

In order to receive the degree of doctor of podiatric medicine, podiatrists must successfully undergo a lengthy, rigorous course of education, training and testing in such diverse areas as biomechanics, orthopedics, radiography, pharmacology, sports medicine, dermatology and surgery.

Although wondrous in design and function, the human foot can also be struck by numerous ailments, some of which are life-threatening. Additionally, many disorders first manifest themselves in the foot.

Podiatrists are often the first healthcare professionals to diagnose these disorders.

Podiatrists also play a critical role in the care, treatment and management of the diabetic, elderly and circulation-impaired. The diagnosis, intervention and treatment by podiatrists may save patients from amputation, restore mobility or prevent other serious, more costly problems, by early detection and appropriate treatment.



Education: Long, Arduous, and Continuing



A doctor of podiatric medicine is to the foot what a dentist is to the mouth or an ophthalmologist is to the eye—a specialist who has undergone lengthy, thorough study to become uniquely well-qualified to treat a specific part of the human body.

A doctor of podiatric medicine successfully navigates a rigorous course of study, training and licensing comparable to—and in some cases exceeding—that of other medical specialties.

After premedical college studies, he or she must complete more than 4,000 hours of studies at a fully accredited college of podiatric medicine. In addition, the podiatrist must complete at least two year of residency training in a general acute care facility.

Minimum education	MD	DPM
Premedical education minimum - 3 years	Yes	Yes
Medical school - minimum 4 years	Yes	Yes
Minimum professional school course hours	4,000	4,000
Postgraduate training of at least one year	Yes	Yes

To begin the quest, a budding DPM must achieve the required results in the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) designed for medical doctors, and compete for a place in an accredited college of podiatric medicine—of which there are only seven in the nation. These are stern requirements.

Annual continuing education in approved programs is required to maintain state licensing.

Yes, treating the disorders and diseases of the foot requires years of specialized education and training.

Podiatric Medicine is a Front Line Defense in the Fight Against Diabetes



Diabetes has become an epidemic, currently afflicting more than 16 million people in the United States. During the last decade more and more people have developed the disease. The American Diabetes Association estimates that every minute at least one person is diagnosed with the disease. Yet there are still those who dismiss it as a trivial affliction. They couldn't be further from the truth.

Diabetes is a systemic disease affecting many different parts of the body, including: feet, eyes, heart, kidneys, nerves, and blood vessels.

Diabetes is the leading cause of amputation, blindness, heart attack, and kidney failure, and kills one American every three minutes. It is known as the silent killer.

Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death by disease in the United States and early symptoms of the disease occur more often in the feet than any other part of the body.

For those with diabetes, ordinary foot problems, such as ingrown toenails and calluses, can quickly escalate into serious complications. One of every four diabetic patients develops foot problems. Twenty per cent of all diabetic patients who enter U.S. hospitals are admitted for foot problems.

Absorbing 14.5 per cent of all US healthcare dollars; the costs of diabetes is staggering both in terms of human suffering from its complications, as well as monetarily. It is estimated that diabetes robs the U.S. economy of approximately \$95 billion in direct medical costs and indirect costs such as lost wages,

productivity, and premature mortality. The disease—in California alone—costs an astounding \$2.85 billion.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates 1,456,000 Californians have diabetes, but half of this number is undiagnosed. Estimates by the American Diabetes Association are even higher for California: 2.2 million, with more than a million undiagnosed.

When diabetes is present, a cut, a scrape or blister can be fatal. The disease is the cause of death for 16,500 Californians annually and results in 5,800 yearly amputations of the lower extremities. Ideal case management of the diabetic patient requires a team approach. The podiatric physician, as an integral part of the treatment team, has documented success in the prevention of amputations.

The federal Centers for Disease Control estimates that up to 85 per cent of diabetic foot and leg amputations can be prevented with proper foot care. "Clinicians must promptly identify persons who are at increased risk, take measures both to treat and prevent the recurrence of foot ulcers," the CDC says.

OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY

According to the US Attorney General:

- 61% of adults in the United States were overweight or obese in 1999.
- In 1999, 13% of children aged 6 to 11 years and 14% of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years in the United States were overweight. This prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past 2 decades.
- Approximately 300,000 deaths each year in the United States may be attributable to obesity.
- Overweight and obesity are associated with heart disease, certain types of cancer, type 2 diabetes, stroke, arthritis, hypertension, breathing problems, and psychological disorders, such as depression.
- Inactivity is considered a major cause of excess weight. Physical activity contributes to weight loss. In addition to weight control, physical activity helps prevent heart disease, helps control cholesterol levels and diabetes, slows bone loss associated with advancing age, lowers the risk of certain cancers, and helps reduce anxiety and depression.

The US Surgeon General notes WALKING for 30 minutes 5 times a week can generate the above health benefits