



# Put Your Best Foot Forward

## Coastal Podiatry

**W**HEN A BABY IS BORN, we take delight in counting those tiny toes to make sure all 10 of them are there. But after that, we don't pay much attention to our feet unless they start to bother us.

Older people tend to develop foot problems – not surprising after a lifetime of standing, walking and running. The foot pads thin with age, bunions may become painful and diabetes can cause serious problems.

BY BARBARA MILLEN PATRICK

But some of Dr. Rahn Ravenell's favorite patients are children because he can save them from a lifetime of problems. And, as much as he enjoys caring for feet, he finds extra pleasure in helping those who suffer from a specific common issue.

"My favorite topic is flat feet," said Dr. Ravenell, of Coastal Podiatry. "Reconstructive surgery, especially on kids, is very rewarding."

Although flat feet can be genetic – look at your parents' feet – they can be caused by injury, obesity or aging. In children, the problem usually begins at about the age of 7, when their bones are still somewhat soft, and surgery can be a viable option to help feet grow properly.

Surgery is not always the first choice, however, for adults. When the feet become painful, other interventions, such as arch supports or custom orthotics, can be helpful. Physical therapy and cortisone injections might also help. When surgery is the answer, Dr. Ravenell will determine the cause of flat feet so he can perform the proper procedure.

Another common problem is heel pain.

"Heel pain is usually plantar fasciitis," Dr. Ravenell explained. "It's mostly caused by hyper-pronation, so the ankle rolls in more than normal and manifests as heel pain. It's a two-step process. First we get rid of the pain, then we work on prevention by supporting the arch."

Bunions are a common complaint for women. Because the surgery has a recovery period of several weeks, Dr. Ravenell recommends it only for those in pain. Geriatric patients are not always good candidates for surgery due to lessened blood flow, which means healing is slower.

Perhaps most importantly, Dr. Ravenell recommends paying attention to your feet.

"Don't take them for granted. Wash and dry them thoroughly," he said.

It is good advice and an easy way to avoid issues such as athlete's foot and toenail fungus. He also suggests having your feet measured by an expert at one of the local running stores to assure a proper fit and to find a style that works well for you. Ill-fitting shoes can cause calluses or corns and can exacerbate bunions.

Coastal Podiatry offers several foot care products, such as cream that helps remove dead skin and calluses and antifungal nail polish. Coastal can also create custom foot orthotics.


If your feet hurt, call Coastal Podiatry. Dr. Ravenell and his wife and partner, Dr. Tamika Ravenell, are ready to help you put your best foot forward. 



Photo provided by Coastal Podiatry.

Dr. Rahn Ravenell recommends paying attention to your feet.

*Coastal Podiatry Specialty Foot Care and Reconstructive Surgery is located at 180 Wingo Way, Suite 201, in Mount Pleasant. For an appointment, call (843) 856-5337. A referral is not needed. Additional information about the practice, foot care issues and services is available at [www.MtPleasantFootDoc.com](http://www.MtPleasantFootDoc.com).*