Annapolis Foot & Ankle Center

News and Updates

November 2026



Thanksgiving Air Travel

A common complaint of air travelers is swelling in the feet and ankles. Extended travel slows the body's circulation. The calves act as natural pumps when they contract, pushing circulating blood back (and up) to the heart. But long periods of sitting means they're not contracting, so blood and other fluids pool in the lower extremities due to gravity. Muscle function can suffer, too, in the form of painful cramping in the calves, arches, or toes.

Also, at high altitudes, the cabin pressure is significantly lower than at ground level, which plays games with vein function and allows fluid to seep from small blood vessels and pool in your feet and ankles. Low cabin humidity can also induce dehydration. The brain senses the need for water and tries to conserve it — hence, lower-extremity pooling.

In addition, high-sodium snacks increase a person's salt levels, which encourages water retention.

These travel hacks can help:

- Cut out alcohol and reduce sodium intake for 24 hours before flying.
- Don compression socks — before you board.
- Wear comfortable, supportive, cushioned shoes that afford some room for expansion.
- Elevate your feet when permissible. Use a rolled-up blanket or footrest (not the seatback in front of you).
- Stay hydrated!
- Do aisle walks and in-seat exercises (e.g., toe curls, ankle rotations, and ankle flexes) every 30 to 60 minutes for flights of two hours or more.
- Do some walking right after landing. Don't immediately hop into a rental car or rideshare.

Harmless travel-induced swelling typically dissipates within 24 to 48 hours. If it lasts longer, is confined to one limb only, or is accompanied by sharp pain, localized redness, or intense warmth, seek medical attention immediately. You might be dealing with a dangerous blood clot.

About the Doctor

Eric S. Harmelin, DPM



Dr. Harmelin grew up in South Florida. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Florida. He then went on to earn his Doctor of Podiatric Medicine from the Barry University School of Podiatric Medicine in Miami. He completed a three-year surgical residency at South Miami Hospital/Baptist Health Systems in South Miami, Florida, and began private practice in 2000 in Fort Lauderdale. Dr. Harmelin joined the team at Annapolis Foot and Ankle Center in 2010.

Dr. Harmelin is a licensed podiatric surgeon in Maryland and is board-certified by The American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery. He is also affiliated with the Maryland Podiatric Medical Association and the American Podiatric Medical Association. He is the chief of Podiatric Surgery at Anne Arundel Medical Center. Dr. Harmelin has a special interest in wound care/limb salvage and reconstructive surgery.

In his spare time, he enjoys playing tennis and spending time with his family.



Tibia Troubles

If pain, a dull ache, or tenderness along the inner edge of your shin bone flares up during or following physical activity, you might have shin splints.

Shin splints are typically caused by repetitive stress or weight-bearing activity. The muscles, tendons, and bone tissue in the lower leg are subjected to more stress than they have time to adapt to and become inflamed. Running and activities involving sharp stops, quick accelerations, and sudden directional changes, such as basketball, soccer, and dancing, can open the door to shin splints.

Other triggers include:

- Increasing mileage, intensity, or frequency of training too abruptly
- Inadequate or worn-out footwear
- Flat feet, high arches, overpronation, tight calves, or limited ankle flexibility
- Irregular walking or running patterns
- Running or jumping on hard surfaces
- Not warming up properly
- Low vitamin D levels, which can affect bone health

An important distinction between shin splints and other lower leg disorders is that shin splint discomfort will extend over a several-inch area rather than be concentrated at one precise spot.

If you develop shin splints, rest and activity modification are called for. If you try "pushing through," the discomfort will worsen and could result in a stress fracture. Try low-impact activities like swimming, cycling, or the elliptical machine while recovering.

Ice the area two to three times per day for 10–15 minutes. Place a thin cloth between the icepack and skin.

Evaluate your shoes! They should have adequate support and cushioning.

Be careful with over-the-counter NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, aspirin). In the short term, they can alleviate pain and inflammation. Overuse and long-term usage can cause stomach ulcers and kidney damage.

If symptoms don't improve after a couple of weeks, contact our practice to schedule a comprehensive evaluation.

Mark Your Calendars

Nov. 3 Election Day: The hanging chad fiasco of 2000 earned punch-card voting machines a federal election ban. Prior, "chad" was just a person's name or a country in Africa.

Nov. 7 Book Lovers Day: The bestselling novel of all time is Don Quixote (500+ million copies). Spoiler alert: It's quixotic.

Nov. 11 Veterans Day: Approximately 16.4 million Americans served in WWII — 30,607 were still with us at the start of 2026.

Nov. 17 Homemade Bread Day: Why aren't bread makers considered hard workers? They're loafers.

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving: A Pew Research Center survey breakdown: 36% prefer to eat Thanksgiving dinner between noon and 3:00; 38% prefer 3:00 to 6:00; and 11% after 6:00. Evidently, 15% don't give a rip.

Nov. 30 Cyber Monday: Originated in 2005, male shoppers outnumber female shoppers, and electronics and fashion are its anchors.



More Than a Sport

Lacrosse is North America's oldest team sport, dating back to the 12th century. Native Americans in southeast Canada developed the game, which was originally known as stickball.

The game was played in wide-open areas ranging from 500 yards to several miles long and wide. Anywhere from 100 to 1,000 men took the field at one time, each wielding a wooden stick that contained a net pouch comprised of deer sinew. Tribes utilized either a wooden ball or one made of deerskin and stuffed with animal hair. The goals incorporated landmarks such as trees or rocks.

To start the game, the ball was tossed in the air, and the players surged toward it to gain possession. Although passing was allowed, doing so was deemed cowardly — avoidance of a challenge. Not surprisingly, the ball progressed slowly, which is why games sometimes lasted for days.

Lacrosse was employed to train warriors for future battle. Conversely, it was also a diplomatic tool to settle disputes and avoid widespread bloodshed. Even so, lacrosse was still a rough-and-tumble game. Fractured limbs and damaging blows to the head were ever-present possibilities.

Prayer and religious rituals were also a big part of pregame preparation, as the tribes believed the sport was medicine for the spirit and soul that could deliver healing on multiple levels. Lacrosse was also a bastion of wagering — maybe trinkets and handkerchiefs; maybe putting wives, children, or the players themselves on the line for indentured servitude.

Lacrosse has naturally evolved and today is the official national summer sport of Canada. It's also one of the fastest-growing sports in the United States. Look for its reemergence in the 2028 Summer Olympics.





Mediterranean Turkey Skillet

Servings: 4; prep time: 20 min.

A quick and easy one-skillet dinner that fits the bill on weeknights and at dinner parties alike.

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. ground turkey (93% lean)
- 1 medium-sized zucchini, diced
- 1 can (15 oz.) chickpeas, drained
- 1 can (14 oz.) diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups frozen/precooked brown rice
- 2 teaspoons Mediterranean/Italian seasoning
- Kosher salt and pepper

For topping:

- 1/3 cup feta cheese crumbles
- 1/4 cup pistachios, shells removed and roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
- Lemon wedges to serve

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a large skillet with a lid over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3–4 minutes.
2. Add the ground turkey and break it up with a wooden spoon or meat masher until just cooked through.
3. Add the zucchini and cook, stirring occasionally, for 3–4 minutes until the zucchini begins to soften.
4. Add the chickpeas, diced tomatoes, frozen rice, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, and Mediterranean/Italian seasoning and stir to combine.
5. Pour 1/4 cup water or chicken broth over the mixture, then cover and let simmer on medium low heat for 10 minutes. If there's still too much liquid at the bottom after 10 minutes, uncover and turn the heat to medium high, stirring occasionally until the liquid has burned off. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. Top with feta cheese, pistachios, parsley, and a squeeze of lemon. Store in the fridge up to 4 days.

Recipe courtesy of broccyourbody.com.

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Thanksgiving Air Travel

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November Is American Diabetes Month

A Case of Mistaken Identity

The most well-known forms of diabetes are type 1 and type 2, but another numbered type lurks that's often misidentified: type 3c diabetes, which affects approximately 1%–9% of diabetics.

With type 1 diabetes, the body's immune system destroys the pancreas's insulin-producing cells. Insulin is a vital hormone that moves sugar (glucose) from the blood into cells for energy, regulating the bloodstream's glucose levels.

Type 2 diabetes develops as the body becomes resistant to insulin over time. The pancreas doesn't produce enough insulin or the body's cells don't respond to insulin properly. Heredity and detrimental lifestyle choices are strong influences.

Type 3c diabetes is caused by damage to the pancreas resulting from a disease, genetic disorder, or prior surgery, or by its removal. Many of its symptoms overlap with types 1 and 2: increased thirst, frequent urination, fatigue, unexplained weight loss, blurry vision, and slower wound healing.

However, with type 3c diabetes, the pancreas also loses its ability to produce glucagon — a hormone that raises blood sugar when it drops too low (hypoglycemia). Bouts of hypoglycemia can be more severe and tougher to recover from. The pancreas damage that leads to type 3c diabetes also impairs enzyme production that aids digestion. With type 1 and 2 diabetes, food digestion is typically normal.



Type 3c diabetes is frequently initially misdiagnosed as type 2 due to a lack of clinician experience with type 3c, the absence of a standardized test for it, and poor communication between specialists. Without proper treatment of the underlying pancreatic condition — which includes oral enzyme treatment — digestive issues will remain and blood sugar maintenance will be erratic.

If you have diabetes, your feet and overall health are at risk. Make our practice part of your diabetic healthcare team.