



Podiatry



Overview

This branch of medicine deals with care of the foot, ankle and lower leg. A doctor who practices podiatry is called a "podiatrist." These doctors understand foot problems and how to correct them.

Training

Podiatry takes care of all parts of the foot and ankle. This includes the skin and nails, the soft tissues, and the bones and joints. Podiatrists go to medical school for four years. They also complete three years of hospital residency. Then, they may go on to get specialized training.

Complex structures

Podiatry doesn't focus solely on anatomy. Your feet and ankles stabilize you. They move you forward. They absorb tremendous shock when you walk and run. So podiatrists need to understand not only the anatomy of the foot and ankle, but also how they move and work with your lower leg. We call this "biomechanics." If you're having a problem that affects the way you walk, a podiatrist can give you treatment options.

Conclusion

Too often, we ignore foot and ankle issues. But even a small problem can get worse over time. Something that can be treated with an orthotic in its early stages may turn into a problem that can only be fixed with surgery. So if you need treatment, don't wait to see a podiatrist for care.