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Submitted By:
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As we approach the warm summer months, many people have a natural tendency to pitch their shoes in favor of sandals and flip-flops. Although sandals have been around for centuries, rubber flip flops became a prominent unisex summer footwear starting in the 60's. They have grown in popularity and become fashionable for everyday use. It is not uncommon to see runway models and movie stars wearing designer flip-flops or professional athletes promoting them on television commercials and magazine ads. People of all

Flip-flops not a safe bet for older adults!

ages are using them for almost any occasion. Despite their popularity, flip-flops are not a safe bet for anyone of any age, especially older adults.

Flip Flops do not provide adequate support causing an abnormal stretch in the arch area. This often leads to heel pain and we see a rise in plantar fasciitis problems during the summer months. We also see a considerable amount of tendonitis in other areas of the foot and ankle as well as arthritic pain in the middle of the foot caused by flip flops and non-supportive shoes.

Flip-flops are not good for walking because they do not provide an adequate cushion for the heel, proper shock absorption, or arch support. Also, flip-flops alter gait (walking) patterns, resulting in structural problems and pain that affects the hips and back. As we age, our ability to accommodate uneven ground declines, and so does our basic stability.

Flip-flops are highly unstable and non-supportive and may lead to much more serious problems,

especially if the tip of the flip-flop on the non-supporting swing leg catches the ground. This often results in a blunt trauma to a toe, a torn nail bed or toe fracture. It can even lead to a devastating fall resulting in a sprain, fracture or trauma. In some cases, this can be life threatening.

As the summer sales begin, try your best to avoid the temptation of purchasing designer sandals that are the prettiest. Make a smart choice and purchase ones that fit properly. Avoid flat sandals as well as high platforms or wedge heels. Some of my podiatrist friends are recommending a closed-toed espadrille in breathable cotton with a low wedge heel. They provide a gentle two-inch slop with good arch support; and the mid foot and ankle straps provide ankle stability.

If ankle straps are not your thing, try a pair of Cloud Slides that mold to your foot. They provide a broad foot strap and thick shock absorbing sole to reduce impact.

Sandals are a better choice than flip-flops for seniors because they offer more support and

protection. The best designs have soles that extend slightly beyond the toes to protect the toe box, an open toed midfoot strap, and back heel strap. I recommend sandals manufactured by Merrell and Keen. The American Podiatric Medical Association website also lists sandals produced by Dansko, Rockport, Chaco, and Wolky.

As a wise blogger for The New York Times once posted in response to an article on flip-flops and foot pain, "Long live flip-flops and those who know how to master their use." Avoid problems from improper footwear. Enjoy your summer by making safe and sensible footwear selections.

For more information on pain relief from tendonitis, heel pain, plantar fasciitis, visit myfootandanklecenter.com. Call (217)787-2700 to schedule an appointment with a board-certified podiatrist. Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois clinics are conveniently located in Springfield, Decatur, Carlinville, and Shelbyville.



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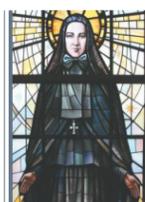
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