Corns and Calluses

Corns

A “corn” is a small circular thickened lesion in the skin of the foot. It usually forms due to repeated pressure on the skin, such as the rubbing of a shoe. The name “corn” comes from its resemblance to a kernel of corn. A corn is different from a callus in that it has a central core of hard material.

People with foot deformities, such as hammertoes, often suffer from corns because the tops of the bent toes rub against the tops of shoes.

There are a number of treatment options for corns. When corns get hard enough to cause pain, a foot and ankle surgeon will recommend the treatment option most appropriate for you. However, if the underlying cause of the corn is not treated or removed, the corn may return. It is important to avoid trying to remove a corn at home or using medicated corn pads, as serious infection may occur.

Calluses

A callus is a thickened area of skin on the foot caused by pressure and repeated rubbing, such as from a shoe or sock. The rubbing causes the skin to produce a layer of protective skin (a callus). Calluses vary in size, and can become painful.

There are a number of treatments for painful calluses. People who have calluses are cautioned against performing “bathroom surgery,” as this can lead to cuts and infection. A foot and ankle surgeon can evaluate the cause of the calluses and recommend the treatment most appropriate for your condition. However, if the underlying cause of the callus is not treated or removed, the callus may return.