

Heel Fissures

Dry Skin Can Lead to Painful Cracks

Dry skin is something that can affect anyone. Dry, hard skin on feet is a very common problem we see at our Palm Desert, CA podiatric office. There are many factors that can cause the skin on your feet to become dry but failing to properly care for it can lead to some serious complications.

What is a Heel Fissure?

Dry, hard skin often develops on the balls of your feet, heels and sides of your toes. Repetitive rubbing or friction, standing for long periods of time, unsupportive shoes and uneven weight distribution can all contribute to the development of dry skin. Dr. Harvey Danciger often sees dry skin develop into calluses, typically on the heels of his patient's feet.

When the skin around the edge of your heel becomes very dry, it can actually begin to crack. These cracks are also called fissures. They are small open wounds that can bleed and be quite painful. They can become deep and infected if not treated properly.

What Causes Heel Fissures?

There are many people that have naturally dry skin. If this is true for you, you are at a higher risk for developing heel fissures. Some of the other causes we see at our office when treating heel fissures include:

- Having calluses that have formed around the edge of your heel
- Having an occupation that requires a lot of standing, especially on hard floors
- Being overweight – The extra weight puts pressure on the fat pad on your feet and may cause it to crack
- Having a skin condition such as eczema or psoriasis
- Wearing open-back shoes regularly – This causes the fat in your heel to expand sideways
- Having a medical condition that causes skin to become dry and possibly cracked
- Living in a dry climate
- Consistently walking barefoot

How are Heel Fissures Treated?

Dr. Danciger often treats foot problems that could have been avoided with early intervention and prevention. Heel fissures can turn serious when they become deep and infected. This is extremely dangerous if you have diabetes or an underlying condition that would compromise the healing process.

When it comes to treating heel fissures, there are a few conservative treatment options available. Depending on the severity of your fissures, Dr. Danciger may implement one or more of the following treatments:

- Moisturizing with an oil-based cream twice a day
- Wearing socks over moisturized feet to keep moisture in
- Gently removing dry, thickened skin with a pumice stone after a bath or shower
- Avoiding walking barefoot
- Avoiding open-backed and thin soled shoes
- Wearing comfortable, supportive shoes with good shock absorption
- Strapping or bandages to hold fissures together while they heal
- Custom orthotics to evenly distribute the weight on your feet and alleviate pressure points

If self-care measures are failing to heal the fissures on your heel, it is important that you call our podiatric office as soon as possible. Again, we cannot encourage this enough if you have another condition such as diabetes, which can complicate the healing process. A small fissure that deepens and becomes infected can turn into disastrous results if you have diabetes. Take care of your feet and come and see us for treatment. You can make an appointment by calling (760) 568-0108 or directly from our homepage.