

## Foot care advice available at GDMH

For many people, going bare foot is one of the true pleasures of life. Yet all too often, foot problems are the root of considerable pain that can affect your lifestyle and even the simple act of walking.

The Occupational Therapy (OT) Department of Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital, and Women's College Hospital Mobile Foot Clinic, have teamed up to offer the community a number of foot care services.

Hazel Vas, an Occupational Therapist at Georgetown hospital, was instrumental in bringing this Foot Clinic to the community. "Earlier in my career, I worked with the Arthritis Society and treated many

patients suffering from serious foot problems. During the course of my treatment, I would often refer patients to the Women's College Hospital Foot Clinic.

"Since joining Georgetown hospital, I have continued to take advantage of the expertise of Women's College Hospital through their Mobile Foot Clinic," explains Vaz.

The Foot Clinic at Georgetown hospital is available to patients on a physician-referral basis, and involves a pre-clinic assessment to determine the patient's particular problem. Educational materials on footwear are also provided to patients.

Lifestyles, including extra-curricular activities

are reviewed, complemented by a physical examination to determine what areas are impacted by foot problems. Symptoms may range from painful feet, foot deformities and poorly-aligned toes, to unequal leg length or gait problems.

Once the assessment is completed, an appointment is then made to attend the next Mobile Foot Clinic, generally held every six weeks. While the majority of patients treated by the OT Department are elderly, Hazel is also seeing an increase in younger active adults which she attributes to their increasing awareness of the need for supportive footwear.

The Mobile Foot Clinic enables patients to select which footwear which will best meet their needs. Supportive footwear no longer look like standard army issue. Today, there is a variety of comfortable footwear such as sandals, dress shoes, slippers, athletic shoes and extra-deep orthopedic footwear — taking into consideration aesthetics and function," says Vaz.

There are shoes to fit almost any foot — ranging from 4 to 12, and width styles from AA to EEE. Shoe modifications such as commercial/custom orthotics support problem feet through better alignment.

"Our patients are not under any obligation to purchase the products through

the Mobile Clinic," Vaz adds. "The focus is the assessment and educational process to enable patients to make appropriate choices in their footwear."

Shoes, orthotics and foot care products from the clinic are not covered by OHIP. However, patients may claim the products on their extended health care or other insurance plans.

For more information on the Mobile Foot Care Clinic offered at Georgetown Hospital, contact the OT Department at 873-0111, Ext. 112.

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