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**TCE Volunteer Recognition Luncheon** is scheduled for April 20<sup>th</sup>. Additional information will be forthcoming.

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Our annual fundraiser **MEN WHO COOK** is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The venue has changed!! This year it will be held at The University Church of Christ. We need Volunteers!! If you would like to volunteer for this event please contact Debra York or Donna Easterwood.

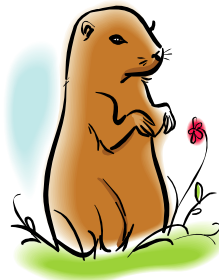
Debra York  
RSVP Director  
(205) 758-3393

Anne Mathews is a native of Tuscaloosa who has been coming to FOCUS for six years. She has been volunteering with the elderly for around 10 years. Bingo is every Tuesday morning at 8:30 but individuals usually start arriving around 7:30. She has been helping lead Bingo for the past three to four years and also leads games in the nutrition center Wednesdays and Thursdays.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

- ♥ The average groundhog is 20 inches long and normally weighs from 12 to 15 pounds. Punxsutawney Phil weighs about 20 pounds and is 22 inches long.
- ♥ A groundhog's diet consists of lots of greens, fruits, and vegetables and very little water. Most of their liquids come from dewy leaves.
- ♥ A groundhog can whistle when it is alarmed. Groundhogs also whistle in the spring when they begin courting.
- ♥ Insects do not bother groundhogs and germs pretty much leave them alone. They are resistant to the plagues that periodically wipe out large numbers of wild animals. One reason for this is their cleanliness.
- ♥ Groundhogs are one of the few animals that really hibernate. Hibernation is not just a deep sleep. It is actually a deep coma, where the body temperature drops to a few degrees above freezing, the heart barely beats, the blood scarcely flows, and breathing nearly stops.
- ♥ A groundhog's life span is normally 6 to 8 years. Phil receives a drink of a magical punch every summer during the annual Groundhog Picnic, which gives him 7 more years of life.



**ON SENIOR CITIZENS**

1920 Sixth Street  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401  
(205) 758-3393

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**Foot Health and Aging**

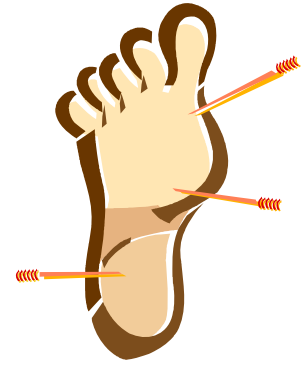
As our feet grow older, they naturally develop more problems. But painful and uncomfortable feet are not a natural part of growing old, or something to 'put up with'. A lot can be done to improve comfort, relieve pain and keep you on your feet for life.

**Mirrors of health**

The condition of our feet often provides early indications of conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and circulatory disease. For this reason, the human foot is sometimes called the 'mirror of health'. Look out for signs such as dry skin, brittle nails, burning and tingling sensations, feelings of cold, numbness and discoloration. Always seek the opinion of your podiatrist when any of these signs occur.

**Foot problems can be prevented**

As we age, our feet tend to spread and lose the fatty pads that cushion the bottom of the feet. If we are carrying extra weight, this can also affect the bone and ligament structure. Many people, including older people, believe that it is normal for feet to hurt, and simply resign themselves to enduring foot problems which could be treated. There are more than 300 different foot conditions. Some are inherited, but for older people, most stem from the impact of years of use. However, even among people in their retirement years, many foot problems can be treated successfully, and the pain of foot conditions relieved. Older people should have their feet measured for shoe sizes more frequently, rather



than presuming that their shoe sizes remain constant. Dry skin and brittle nails are other conditions older people commonly face. Taking good care of your foot health has many benefits including increasing your comfort, limiting the possibility of additional medical problems, reducing your chance of hospitalization due to infection, and keeping you active and mobile.

**Keep them walking**

Mobility can be a problem for older people, yet with basic foot care, and the prompt attention of any problems, getting around shouldn't be difficult. Podiatrists provide services designed to help keep older people on their feet, serving in hospitals, community health centers and nursing

## Foot Health and Aging continued

homes, as well as in private practice.

### Foot health tips

- Properly fitted shoes are essential. The older you get, the more you need a shoe that holds your foot firmly in place and gives adequate support. Sloppy old favorites should be thrown out: a shoe with a firm sole and soft upper is best for daily activities.
- Walking is the best exercise for your feet.
- Pantyhose or stockings should be of the correct size and preferably free of seams.
- Except at the beach, avoid going barefoot, even in your own home.
- Do not wear tight garters as these can affect your circulation.
- Never cut corns and calluses with a razor, pocket knife, or other such instruments and don't use over-the-counter corn products unless they have been recommended to you by your podiatrist.
- Bathe your feet daily in lukewarm (not hot) water, using a mild soap, preferably one containing mois-

turizers, or use a moisturizer separately.

- Trim or file your toenails straight across, or have a podiatrist cut them for you.
- Inspect your feet every day, or have someone do this for you. If you notice any redness, cracks in the skin, or sores, consult your podiatrist.
- Have your feet examined by a podiatrist at least once a year.

### Nail care

Keeping nails cut and under control will help keep you mobile. Yet a lot of elderly people find cutting toenails a problem, due to poor eyesight or difficulties in bending down. If you can cut them yourself, make sure you cut them straight across to a length just below the end of the toe, using a strong pair of nail clippers. After clipping, smooth nails with a file or emery board, using downward strokes. Your podiatrist will be able to cut even heavily overgrown or thick nails painlessly, and advise on appropriate self-care.

### How your podiatrist can help

Podiatrists are skilled foot health professionals trained to deal with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of medical and surgical conditions of the feet and lower limbs. Podiatrists have completed a Bachelor of Podiatry or higher degree, and are continually upgrading their skills and knowledge through further education and training. Regular visits to your podiatrist can help prevent foot problems, alleviate pain and help keep you on your feet and mobile.

### Where can I find a podiatrist?

Refer to your Yellow Pages for podiatrists who are members of the Australian Podiatry Association. Many health funds in Australia provide cover for podiatry services on their ancillary tables and government funded services are available through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, some public hospitals and community health centers.



Debra York, RSVP Director  
758-3393 ext. 16 or  
rsvptusc@hotmail.com.

RSVP is starting off the New Year with a bang!!

Our TCE Program offers free tax assistance/counseling to individuals with special emphasis placed on those who are age 60 or older. Our TCE Volunteers will receive extensive training during the month of January in preparation for the 2010 tax season. Appointments will be available on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays beginning February 2<sup>nd</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. Prior to scheduling your appointment, make sure you have received all of your 2009 tax information. For additional information contact Debra York.

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HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR UNUSED OVER-THE-COUNTER AND PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS.

**Don't flush** your medications down the toilet ! US Scientist have discovered that prescription and over-the-counter drugs are infiltrating the water supply of millions of Americans every day! Sex Hormones, heart medications, mood stabilizers, anticonvulsants, anti-anxiety, pain medications and antibiotics are among some of the drugs found polluting our drinking water supply. **Don't throw** your medications in the

trash to also ensure your medications don't filter into our water supply or get into the wrong hands!

Through RSVP/FOCUS partnering with Alabama Poison Control, Tuscaloosa City Police Department, West Alabama Narcotics, Northport Police Department, City of Northport Police Department and Fire Department, TRIAD, and Safe Kids we are assisting in keeping our water supply and community safe.

The Annual Drug Roundup, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday, is scheduled for January 19<sup>th</sup> with drop off points being FOCUS on Senior Citizens and Northport Fire Station #1. Bag up your expired or unused medications and drop them off at the drop points between the hours of 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. For additional information contact Debra York.

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A Personal Protection/Self Defense class will be scheduled for February. It will be provided by Grand Master James Bailey, 8th degree black belt and owner of James Bailey's Taekwondo. This class will be appropriate for all female/male Volunteers and FOCUS staff. If you have an interest, contact Debra York so that the number of classes to schedule can be determined.

RSVP Volunteer Recognition Celebration has been tentatively scheduled for March 29<sup>th</sup>. Additional information will be forthcoming.