



Q “Are there contacts for allergy sufferers? My eyes get irritated during my morning bike ride.”

A “Don’t be so quick to blame allergies,” says Thomas Steinemann, M.D., professor of ophthalmology at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. “For many, the irritation is actually caused by dry eyes.” No matter the trigger, often the solution is daily disposable contacts. “Even if you’re scrupulous about keeping your contacts and lens case clean, allergens and germs build up, causing discomfort,” he says. “By throwing out your contacts daily and using rewetting drops, you minimize exposure.” Also smart for cyclists: Wear wraparound sunglasses to block wind, which can worsen your eye problem.

Q “My workout gives me heartburn. Is it OK to take a daily OTC antacid?”

A Not really. “While antacids are fairly harmless, you need to figure out why you’re getting exercise-induced indigestion in the first place,” says gastroenterologist Robynne Chutkan, M.D., founder of the Digestive Center for Women in Chevy Chase, Maryland. Most likely your stomach is still processing your last meal, especially if it was a fatty one. “Because fat is harder to digest,

it sits in your stomach longer than carbs or protein. If you exercise while your stomach is full, acid is more likely to come up into your esophagus, causing heartburn,” Dr. Chutkan says. Since fat isn’t always the culprit—some people simply digest slowly—don’t eat anything heavy three to four hours before your workout and avoid caffeine and chocolate, which are classic sources of heartburn. If you still require antacids after adjusting your diet, see your doc for an evaluation.

Q “I’m a runner who has plantar fasciitis. Will cortisone shots ease my pain?”

A “They may, but that shouldn’t be your first line of attack,” says Cary Zinkin, D.P.M., a podiatrist in Deerfield Beach, Florida. “Cortisone is an anti-inflammatory steroid that temporarily relieves the stabbing pain in your heel and arch associated with plantar fasciitis, but it can weaken soft tissue in the foot, resulting in further injury.” A better first step to ease discomfort is to try custom orthotics, ibuprofen, physical therapy or stretching exercises. Another option: foot strapping, in which a podiatrist tapes the bottom of the foot to add support and decrease strain. You should also have your gait analyzed by a foot care specialist. “If you’re an overpronator—your ankle rolls too far in—wearing less-than-supportive sneakers will worsen the condition,” Dr. Zinkin says.

in short

“Do I need flip-flops for locker-room showers?”

They’re a must. “The fungus that causes athlete’s foot and the viruses that bring about warts are all over the gym floor, so you need protection wherever people go barefoot,” says Seema Ramcharitar-Amante, D.P.M., a podiatric surgeon in New York City. To further fend off cooties, dry your feet after showering and change into different shoes and socks from the ones you just sweated in.



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