

Flip Flops Lack Necessary Support for Everyday Use

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One person's comfort may be another person's pain. **Dr. Karen Rouw**, a podiatrist at Central Minnesota Foot & Ankle Clinic in St. Cloud, has seen plenty of patients with foot problems. "In recent years, flip-flops have become the norm for so many people — not just teenagers," Rouw said. "People will use them just as regular shoes, and yeah, they're cheap and air out your toes, but you don't have the support and are at more risk at developing foot problems."

They may be supremely comfortable for some but — constructed of a flat piece of rubber or leather and held on the foot by a thin strip — flip-flops can be a headache. "There are people who need more support than their body is able to give naturally. If you have a flatter foot with very little arch, you're more prone to having foot pain," Rouw said.

Flip-flops do protect the foot from, say, the hot sand of a beach or the grit found poolside, and they can also help prevent the spread of athlete's foot or plantar warts. Rouw said, "But you're more prone to injury because you've got exposed toes."

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