



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Foot & Ankle
SPECIALISTS



SPOTLIGHT ON: DR. HAN NGUYEN



Summer 2021 Newsletter

Our newest associate, Dr. Han Nguyen, has been with us for a while now, but we know many of you have not yet had the chance to meet her. We are absolutely thrilled to have her as an addition to our team!

Dr. Nguyen originally hails from Florida, but received her foot and ankle education at the prestigious Dr. William M. Scholl College of Podiatric Medicine in Chicago. Upon graduation, she went on to complete a 3-year residency in integrated podiatric medicine and surgery at the White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles.

A main focus of Dr. Nguyen's education and training has been in reconstructive foot and ankle surgeries, as well as sports medicine. She has completed training at USC Keck Medical Center with the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery service, and also served as a member of the Center for Limb Preservation & Advanced Wound Care at White Memorial. During her time with the latter, major amputation procedures were reduced by nearly 80 percent!

You might see Dr. Nguyen for help with a wide variety of foot and ankle conditions. Her specialty areas include treating bunions, hammertoes, neuromas, and sports injuries.

But what does Dr. Nguyen like to do when not helping patients find relief and mobility? She loves outdoor activities such as tennis, running, and going on hikes with her dog. She has also taken her love of food and travel to locations such as Spain, France, and Costa Rica. Ask her about them!

WILL A PLANT-BASED DIET HELP PATIENTS WITH DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

Diabetic neuropathy can be a condition of great concern, particularly in the feet and lower limbs.

As foot and ankle specialists, we are always invested in helping patients experiencing progressive nerve damage slow or halt that progression. The more we can do for a patient in the present, the better we can reduce the chances of severe complications in the future – up to and including the need for amputation (just like Dr. Nguyen did at White Memorial above!).

A recent article that caught our attention comes from the journal Lifestyle Medicine, and focuses on the potential impact that a plant-based diet may have on patients with type 2 diabetes and diabetic neuropathy.

This article reviewed studies from the past 30 years (1990-2020) that concerned placing adult diabetic patients on “vegetarian,” “vegan,” or “plant-based” diets.

The review yielded some interesting results. First, research on plant-based diets in this realm is surprisingly limited! The researchers could only find a small number of studies that fit their relatively simple criteria.



Of the studies that did fit the criteria, though, conclusions appeared to hold some promise for patients experiencing diabetic neuropathy. Patients in these studies reported partial or full relief of neuropathic pain as a part of their regimen. In a 1994 study in particular, more than 80% of a 21-patient study pool reported complete relief of neuropathic pain within 4-16 days as part of a program that involved vegan eating and exercise.

SO SHOULD YOU GO ALL-VEGGIE TO FIGHT DIABETIC NEUROPATHY?

Maybe! But as the article itself does not hesitate to note, more research is sorely needed in this area. Studies were difficult for the researchers to locate, and none of them isolated a whole-food, plant-based diet as a factor. These diets were all included in overall programs that also featured exercise and other influential elements.

Clearly, *only* switching to a vegan or vegetarian diet will likely not have as beneficial an overall impact on diabetic neuropathy as would incorporating additional healthier changes with it, but we could really use more data to get a better picture of just how big the influence of those diets can be.

Hopefully, those studies will become more plentiful the more that plant-based diets become widespread. But what if you are considering switching to a plant-based diet now?

Going vegan or vegetarian may certainly benefit you if you are experiencing diabetic neuropathy. **However**, it is always important to discuss any major changes to your diet with us or your primary care physician first. You may have unique individual needs or factors that should be talked about or addressed, in order to get the best results or avoid unexpected problems.

If you are interested in checking out the article discussed here for yourself, you can [find it here](#).