

Putting their best feet forward

(article that appeared in Brant News by Colleen Toms)

Registered nurse opens foot care clinic in Paris



Foot care

Shelley Sager offers basic, advanced and diabetic foot care at Cobblestone Medicine and Rehab in Paris.

We rely on them on a daily basis to get from point A to point B.

But when it comes to daily care, our feet are often overlooked.

Registered nurse Shelley Sager recently joined Cobblestone Medicine and Rehab Clinic in efforts to help people learn how to care for their feet and in turn, avoid potentially life-altering problems.

“I had five full-day mentorship days at a diabetic foot care clinic in Hamilton that was absolutely amazing,” Sager said from her office in Paris. “The physician who owned and ran the clinic only dealt with diabetic feet and I saw things that even in my 32 years of nursing, I kind of went ‘oh my lord. How can people live like that.’”

“It really drove home that whole message about diabetic foot care and elderly people and foot care and the problems they can get into.”

Sager completed a basic, advanced and diabetic foot care program and in March 2016 opened an office at Cobblestone Medicine and Rehab Clinic.

“With our population growing older and our population being more prone to diabetes, we always talk about foot care as being really important but I don’t think people necessarily understand that,” Sager said.

“As you get older, first of all we become less flexible and it’s harder for us to cut our toenails. Also, our eyesight changes and it’s harder to see what we’re doing when we’re cutting them and of course that is a prime place for infection if you’re nipping the skin.”

Diabetes compounds the problem because wounds are slower to heal.

“Diabetic wounds happen, they get sores, they just grow, they don’t close,” Sager said. “The leading cause of amputations is diabetes and wounds that won’t heal.”

As a registered nurse, infection control is paramount for Sager, who utilizes single-use, disposable instruments. She has also completed a pedicure program but said her role as a foot care nurse is quite different.

“One of the differences of someone going for a pedicure and someone coming in for foot care is that we don’t soak their feet,” Sager said. “As nice as it feels...the problem with soaking our feet is that it makes the skin really soft and more prone to cutting if we happen to miss the nail.”

An extensive assessment is conducted for first-time clients during an hour-long consultation. Sager will examine the person’s ability to stand from a seated position and their ability to balance, analyze their gait, examine their insoles and evaluate the condition of the skin and nails of the feet.

She also assesses whether or not a patient has sensation in their feet.

“It’s really important because are they someone who checks the water before they get into the bathtub or do they just get in,” Sager said. “If they have no sensation in their feet they’re not going to feel that.”

Sager will treat ingrown toenails, reduce corns and calluses, teach people to care for their feet and if necessary, make referrals to other healthcare practitioners.

“Once we have done all that I apply some cream, depending what the issues are,” Sager said. “You should put moisturizer on your feet every day but a lot of people don’t know that.”

“We do know that feet are important and if you have ever been someone that suffers from foot pain or foot issues, it’s exhausting. It takes a lot out of you.”

Sager recommends clients visit every four to six weeks for 30-minute foot care appointments following the initial assessment. The foot care service is covered or partially covered by third-party insurance companies.

For more information or to book an appointment call 519-442-2237