



### **Dear Ladies, do you still think high heels are worth it?**

It's not what fashion-conscious women want to hear—another warning about high heels.

But according to Dr. Thull, pump-style shoes often cause significant pain by irritating a common bony deformity on the back of the heel called 'pump bump.' In many cases, it can lead to bursitis or Achilles tendonitis if left untreated.

"Pump bump is common in young women who wear high heels almost every day," says Dr. Thull. He is a member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS).

"The rigid back of a pump-style shoe can create pressure that aggravates the heel bone when walking," says Dr. Thull

According to the ACFAS Consumer Web site, FootHealthFacts.org, the bump or bony protrusion is a hereditary deformity that can cause Achilles tendonitis or bursitis due to constant irritation from pump-style shoes. Those with high arches or tight Achilles tendons are especially vulnerable to developing pump bump if they work in high heels.

The medical term for the disorder is Haglund's deformity. In addition to the noticeable bump, symptoms include pain where the Achilles tendon attaches to the heel, swelling in the back of the heel and redness in the area.

In most women, doctors can prescribe shockwave therapy, stretching exercises and medications to reduce the pain and inflammation. This does not, however, get rid of the bony protrusion. Dr. Thull says icing the back of the heel reduces swelling, and stretching exercises can relieve tension in the Achilles. Long-term, it's best to avoid wearing high heels, if possible.

"When the dress code requires high heels, I tell my female patients to try heel lifts to decrease pressure on the heel," says Dr. Thull. "Or, I recommend they wear appropriate dress shoes that have soft backs or are backless."

Women with foot pain should contact Fußzentrum Köln. For more information on "pump bump" and other foot and ankle conditions, visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org).