



# FUSSPFLEGE AKTUELL

The magazine  
for the practice

Issue 2/2023

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The new Refreshing Sorbet from Gehwol

## Summer Party 2023



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# Sommer Party 2023



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## Publishing information Please order via the publisher

**Publisher:** FUSSPFLEGE AKTUELL is published on behalf of Eduard Gerlach GmbH, Bäckerstraße 4-8, 32312 Lübbecke, phone: 05741 330-0, fax: 05741 347300, email: info@gehwol.de, online: www.gehwol.de

**Editing staff and publisher:** Dorothea Küsters Life Science Communications GmbH, Falkstraße 5, 60487 Frankfurt am Main, phone: 069 61998-0, Telefax: 069 61998-10, email: info@dkcommunications.de, online: www.dkcommunications.de; editorial board: Dorothea Küsters (responsible), Dirk Fischer; editorial: Lisa Viel, Philipp Stagnier, Barbara von Wirth

**Graphic concept and implementation:**  
District Line Werbeagentur GmbH / Ober-Mörlen

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# Fit Feet for Olympia



The 16th Special Olympics World Games – the countdown is on: From June 17 to 25, the world's largest inclusive sports event will take place in Berlin. The capital is looking forward to 7,000 athletes from more than 170 nations and over 300,000 guests from all over the world. Joana Weingärtner, head of the GEHWOL Academy, will be on hand to provide podological support to the active participants.

The Special Olympics World Games are held every two years, and are the sporting highlight for many people with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The Olympic idea here is as follows: Sports should help to bring more recognition, self-confidence and inclusion. Anticipation is high when thousands of athletes compete and measure their performance in 26 sports under the motto #UnbeatableTogether. With so much intense competition, health care is critical. This is ensured by the Healthy Athletes® programs with free offers covering health promotion and preventive healthcare. At Gerlach too, commitment to people with disabilities is an important part of the corporate culture, right up to the executive level. For example, Jobst-Peter Gerlach-v. Waldthausen has been a volunteer on the board of Lebenshilfe Lübbecke for many years. So it did not take long to decide whether the company wanted to support the World Games after its commitment to the national games last year. With its foot care expertise, it was just as clear how best to provide this support: Joining the team for the program "Fit Feet" is Joana Weingärtner. The podologist and head of the GEHWOL Academy supports the volunteer crew assisting podologist Birgit Jürgens from Emsdetten at the Fit-Feet-Point for the event's duration – along with foot examinations, sock and shoe inspections, care advice, gait analyses and experience modules to promote foot sensory skills. Of course, she has also brought along plenty of products for on-site care. "No other event like this manages to promote inclusion as strongly and on such a communal level as sports. I am not only excited to see how much support I can give the active participants, but also how such a large international cooperative event functions. Being a part of that is a great feeling," says Joana Weingärtner, describing her anticipation.



The new Refreshing Sorbet from Gehwol

# Summer Party 2023



# Cheers!

## These summer tips cool hot feet

When summer temperatures climb well above the 20-degree mark, the sweat starts to run, and even the feet get hot and humid. "Smelly" foot odour is not far off. This is the time to use a targeted mix of care measures. Fresh and revitalized, you and your feet can enjoy even the most brooding summer days.

In order for all our vital organs to be able to perform their tasks without any problems, the inside of our body needs a constant "body core temperature" of around 37 °C. In order not to overheat in hot conditions and high summer temperatures, our body counteracts this with two-pronged thermal protection: The blood vessels dilate, increasing blood flow to the skin. This allows internal heat to be radiated to the environment. The sweat glands of the skin also become increasingly active. Watery sweat runs down our chest and back, and covers other parts of our skin like a film. Our feet usually also start to get wet. Sweating a lot is not pleasant, but it has a true cooling effect. This is because the evaporation of moisture into the air causes evaporative cooling, cooling the skin and the blood circulating through it.

### When foot sweat flows

At around 250,000 sweat glands, the soles of our feet are much more densely packed with sweat glands than other body regions. The sweat they normally produce - about a quarter of a liter a day - ensures that the corneal layer is lightly moisturized. This gives our feet a particularly firm grip on the floor. For the unclothed feet of our ancestors, this physiological adaptation made complete sense. But nowadays, it tends to cause a moisture problem. Excessive perspiration is pretty much unavoidable when the feet are enclosed in shoes, especially with rising outdoor temperatures. But the longer the feet "bathe" in sweat, the more they develop nuisance odours. The cause of this can be attributed to the natural bacterial inhabitants of our skin, which decompose the foot sweat and its components. Sweat consists of 99 percent water, while metabolic products such as urea, amino acids, salts and lactic acid make up the rest. Their decomposition produces the typically rancid, pungent foot odour that makes us wrinkle our noses.

The new Refreshing Sorbet from Gehwol

# Summer Party 2023



But it's not a good idea to keep your feet enclosed when it's hot, even if you are embarrassed by "cheese feet". Closed shoes and socks make foot sweat even worse. The foot skin should be able to "breathe" in open footwear instead. Walking barefoot is also recommended, as this allows the moisture to easily evaporate into the air. But careful: This is not the case in the presence of diabetes or other diseases that damage sensation in the feet! In these cases, you should always wear shoes. Of course, people with diabetes can also wear breezy summer models. Wearing breathable, well-fitting socks and shoes is generally advisable for anyone, not just people with diabetes. Socks and shoes should also be changed at least once a day, and footwear should be aired out for 24 hours. Foot hygiene is even more important in hot weather. This means cleaning the feet several times a day, if possible.

## What can provide relief?

For over-heated, smelly and swollen feet, foot baths also offer a refreshing change. Simply put, heat exchange takes place based on a simple physical law. The rule is: If two components with different temperatures closely interact, the part with the higher temperature (foot) loses heat to the part with the lower temperature (foot bath) until they reach an equilibrium. The heat that is given off always equals the amount of absorbed heat. A cool bath refreshes more than just the feet. After all, the heat that is given off originates from the entire body. So the refreshment tip is: Simply immerse your feet (up to your calves) into cool water for about five minutes. Then, gently but thoroughly dab the skin dry with a towel, making sure to include the spaces between the toes. Fungi affect this area in particular if any remaining dampness swells the skin. By the way: A cool foot bath is not only refreshing, but also relaxing, especially before going to bed in the evening. Cooling down activates the circulation. It clears the head and has a calming effect, allowing us to sleep well.

## Natural touches for foot baths

The soothing effect of a cooling foot bath can be enhanced with essential oils. For example, oils of mountain pine, eucalyptus and peppermint have skin-refreshing and invigorating effects. At the same time, these oils disinfect and deodorize. Camphor oil is also cooling. It also has antiseptic and antifungal effects. Lime oil likewise refreshes and revitalizes, and has antibacterial effects. Just four to five drops of oil are enough for a foot bath! And GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Herbal Foot Bath makes it even easier. This ready-made additive enriches the bath water with oils of rosemary, mountain pine, eucalyptus and lavender. GEHWOL Refreshing Foot Bath with cooling menthol is another alternative.





## Proven care

GEHWOL also offers other specialized care products for counteracting hot, sweaty feet. Among others, these include:

- GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT MINT: The cooling foot balm revitalizes and nourishes the feet with natural peppermint oil, menthol, and essential oils of mountain pine, rosemary and lavender. It provides lasting relief from foot odour and also protects against fungus.
- GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT GREEN: Lastingly prevents foot odour with the Deozinc active ingredient complex. Sweating is moderated, while the natural essential oils of invigorating camphor and cooling menthol relieve burning feet. Proven, disinfecting active ingredients prevent foot fungus. The cream also provides rich care with shea butter, jojoba oil and aloe vera.
- GEHWOL med Antiperspirant: With regular, daily use, the cream lotion keeps your feet drier, odour-free and protected against fungus. The product inhibits perspiration, making it especially suitable for people with heavily sweating feet. Aloe vera, avocado oil and glycerine nourish the skin.
- GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Care Spray: The natural essential oils of mountain pine, rosemary and lavender along with menthol lend a refreshing effect to the spray, eliminating irritating foot odour and protecting the skin from foot fungus. Care specialists such as allantoin, panthenol and urea moisturize and ensure smooth and well-groomed feet.

## Extra summer-Topping

### The new GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet - Limited Edition with lime and water mint!

The new Refreshing Sorbet from GEHWOL offers the perfect refreshment kick! Its extracts of water mint and lime give hot summer feet what they so urgently need: energy and cooling freshness. GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet is a limited special edition that is only temporarily available from foot care professionals.

With its combination of water mint and lime extract, the "Refreshing Sorbet" brings longed-for care to hot summer feet while protecting against harmful microorganisms:

- Simply apply "Refreshing Sorbet" to the skin: Thanks to its texture, the gel-like liquid is easy to spread, absorbs quickly, and immediately lends a feeling of invigorating freshness.
- The main factor that is responsible for the cooling effect is water mint (*mentha aquatica*) extract. In combination with menthol, it activates specific cold receptors in the skin. These react as the temperature drops, giving the body the desired cold sensation.
- Lime extract is the freshness formula's second bonus. The lime (or "little lime") is 85 percent water and also rich in vitamin C, various fruit acids, and energizing and moisturizing essential oils. The extract contributes to a refreshed and rejuvenated complexion while leaving the skin feeling pleasantly nourished.
- Shea butter, sesame oil, konjac root and aloe moisturize the skin, leaving it supple and visibly smooth.

The summer fresh scent of citrus fruits also provides you with renewed energy. The new GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet can also be used after chilling in the refrigerator. The new limited summer edition is vegan, dermatologically tested and suitable for diabetics.





# Why are right-handed people usually also right-footed?

Who would have thought that? People are not just right or left-handed, but also right and left-footed. About one in ten people are left-handed, and about 60 percent of this group are also left-footed. But of course, this means: Four out of ten left-handers are predominantly right-footed. In contrast, almost all right-handers (nearly 97 percent) are also right-footed. But there are also those who are a mixture of the two. It's not yet clear why. We spoke with psychology professor Dr. Sebastian Ocklenburg about the correlation of dominance in hands and feet.

Whether the right or left side of the body dominates in a person is referred to as "laterality". If you write, button your shirt and slice your bread with your left hand, you are left-handed - if you use your right hand, you are right-handed. Being left-footed is reflected, for example, by climbing a ladder with the left foot first, kicking a ball with the left foot and starting with the left foot first when dancing.

## **A question of the brain**

According to scientific findings, a person's laterality is determined by their (left or right) cerebral hemispheres. It decides which hand takes the lead in fine motor tasks and which side of the body is dominant in movement processes. But since the nerve pathways from the brain cross over each



other in the spinal cord, the control of the body sides is asymmetrical (i.e. mirror-inverted). Therefore the right cerebral hemisphere is responsible for controlling the left hand and left foot.

#### Why is it reciprocal?

Why doesn't left or right-handedness always correspond with the dominant foot? And why is it not always clearly about right or left dominance? Also of interest: An estimated nine percent of all people have mixed foot-hand dominance. Which means they alternate their hand and foot use in different tasks. Psychologist Prof. Dr. Sebastian Ocklenburg: "Feet and hands are controlled by the left and right cerebral hemispheres, respectively, but each is controlled by different areas of the brain. Brain development is crucial here, leading to structural brain differences. Another factor is that left-handers are often re-educated, which is to say they are trained to use their right hand."



**Prof. Dr. rer. nat.  
Sebastian Ocklenburg**  
Psychologist

Prof. Dr. rer. nat. Sebastian Ocklenburg is a psychologist and teaches at the Medical School Hamburg - University of Applied Sciences and Medical University. One of his main research interests lies in the field of basic biopsychological research about left and right-sidedness, including motor processes.

# But aren't just as many left-handed people also left-footed?





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Expressions like when someone “gets cold feet”, feels “stepped on” or is “caught off foot” and others like these show: We associate the feet with our emotions and state of mind. In toe reading, the basic assumption is that the feet and toes reflect the soul, personality and life situation of a person. We spoke with foot expert Christa Schafer, toe analysis expert and co-author of “The Modern Toe Encyclopedia”, which is about what our feet and toes can reveal.

#### **Ms. Schafer, what got you into toe reading?**

Initially, I was curious about the topic. But at the same time too, I was moved by the question of why foot problems, such as pressure sores or ingrowing toenails, persist or reoccur despite treatment or shoe changes. The toe analysis has given me answers here - and these are confirmed every day in my work in the practice talking with my customers.

#### **What are the underlying assumptions of toe analysis?**

The connection between the feet, body, mind and soul is also the assumption of reflex zone therapy, which sees the entire body reflected in the feet. And with enough time spent analyzing someone’s feet, you can reveal a lot. The shape of the toes suggests a person’s character traits. The position and direction of the toes gives information about the person’s behaviour, meaning their reaction to external stimuli and events. Painful areas, skin and nail changes also allow conclusions to be drawn about the mental state.

#### **What aspects play a role in toe reading?**

The shape and size of the toes are one of the factors taken into consideration. If they are particularly short, for example, this speaks for a family person. They also indicate that manageability and habits are important to them. This kind of person is usually sociable and uncomplicated. It also matters whether the toes of the right or left foot are involved, as there are different energy centres located here. For example, the middle toe of the right foot represents drive and aggression, while the middle toe on the left foot is associated with creativity.

But naturally, the toenails and the nail bed are also part of it. What is their size, shape and thickness? For example, are they grooved, rolled or torn? Whether inflammation is present also allows for conclusions to be drawn. Take nail bed inflammation, for example. In my experience, inflammation expresses anger and how the victim sees their peace and freedom as being at risk. A sense of defencelessness is dominant here. There is also a fear of emotional injury.

# Toeanalysis

Who are you and  
how are you doing?

## How do you incorporate toe analysis into your work?

If I recognize what drives and move a person in my work, I can carefully address their assumptions and perceptions. Their attention can be drawn to a topic that is important to them, allowing them to process the information and come to their own conclusions. In this case, the presence of changes in the toes is illustrated by the photos in our book, which my colleague Roswitha Gampp and I were taking when we first analyzed someone's toes and then again later on. The texts, which provide the background information for the photos, are based on conversations with them. Beyond that, however, reading your own toes can also open your eyes, providing food for thought and bringing about change.

**Ms. Schafer,**  
thank you for the interview.

**Das moderne Zehenlexikon. Was Zehen über uns erzählen. [The modern toe encyclopaedia. What toes tell us about ourselves.]**

The two authors Roswitha Gampp, toe analysis instructor, and Christa Schafer, toe analysis expert, have summarized their practical findings in a simple, easy-to-understand approach in their textbook. The toe encyclopaedia doesn't just provide information on the art of toe analysis. It also shows - using 80 different typifications - which conclusions can be drawn from toes about character traits and talents, and which problems and crises they can point to in a person. The second part, which is also richly illustrated, shows before-and-after examples from real life.

The hardcover book has 184 pages and was published in 2022. Under ISBN No. 978-3-944840-20-8, it can be ordered from bookstores at a price of 39.80 euros or free of shipping charges at [www.zehenlesen-gampp.de](http://www.zehenlesen-gampp.de).



**Christa Schafer** has been running her own foot care practice in the Swiss town of Schmiten (Fribourg Canton) since 2012. In addition to foot treatments, she also offers toe analysis





No flight to the heights without  
**FOOT SENSATION**

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## Whether to climb barefoot or with shoes?

His fingers claw into the rock crevices, while his toes find a foothold on barely visible ledges. Even on nearly horizontal rock overhangs, Charles Albert seems to move as confidently as a gecko. Solely with the power of his muscles, with his bare hands and feet, the French climbing artist scales meter-high boulders. With his acrobatic skills, he is the star of the bouldering scene, a sport that requires maximum strength and precision from his fingertips to the very tips of his toes.

Alpine mountaineering is unthinkable without ropes and belay devices. But things are different in bouldering, which celebrated its Olympic premiere in Tokyo in 2021. Here, the goal is to climb boulders or artificial climbing walls without aids. Aside from fall and jump training, only crash mats ensure safety here. The chalk which is carried in a pouch on the belt helps to give the hands and fingers a good grip. While climbing is also done at greater heights on rocks, the jump height in bouldering centers is limited to around four meters. But the skill is the same: to master the extremely sloping, vertical or even overhanging path as efficiently as possible.

This is not entirely about muscle power. Bouldering route builder Peter Zeidelhack tells us what matters most: "Agility, the correct position and tension of the body, perfect movement sequences and grip-step sequences, as well as fingertip and toe sensitivity are also part of it. Bouldering particularly requires upper body strength. But the feet - specifically the toes, forefoot, foot edges and heels - also do a lot of heavy work here. For example, depending on your stepping opportunities, your entire body weight might rest on one toe."

### Extreme stress on the feet

While Charles Albert and a few other climbing enthusiasts perform their rocky feats barefoot in nature, most bouldering fans rely on special climbing shoes, which are also a necessity when bouldering indoors. They provide optimal support for the foot. This is because their particularly tight fit provides maximum pressure on the tread surfaces, some of which are very small. The shoes are also concave, i.e. curved downwards. This increases the preload and the contact pressure of the toes. The asymmetrical tip which is tailored to the big toes further enhances this power. "However, the feet have to withstand a lot in this way - and not just on the bouldering walls and rocks," Peter Zeidelhack explains. "And there's more: Because the shoes expand in use, some climbing fans preventively buy them one to three sizes too small," he reports.

But that's not merely painful. Exposed to the intense pressure of shoes and the strain of climbing, painful pressure sores, calluses and corns - especially on the top of the toes - are almost unavoidable. Haematomas under the toenails are not uncommon either. And last but not least, the warm and humid climate in the shoes - which are worn without socks - favours recurrent fungal infections. As in the feet of all athletes, the right foot and shoe care is needed here: In addition to daily foot hygiene, regular callus-softening foot baths are recommended, followed by gentle callus removal (e.g. with a pumice stone). The subsequent application of a product containing urea provides the skin with the necessary moisture and prevents new calluses from forming. It is also important not to trim the toenails too much and especially trim them straight. This helps to avoid inflammation and infections of the nail wall and nail - especially with fungal infections.

As for the shoes (which should not be bought too tight-fitting!), they should always be allowed to dry out well after being worn, regularly sprayed inside with an antifungal spray, and also put through the washing machine with a hygiene rinse. A second pair of bouldering shoes ensures thorough drying and also prevents pressure points from developing.



#### Peter Zeidelhack

As a member of the management team, Peter Zeidelhack is in charge of bouldering route construction for the four climbing centers of the German Alpine Club [Deutscher Alpenverein] in Thalkirchen, Freimann, Gilching and Bad Tölz. He also coordinates the DAV federal training team "Routenbau Breitensport".

# Flawless

# Imperfekt

My feet,  
my business.

Your own needs often take a back seat in the stress of everyday life. Self-care plays an important role in personal wellbeing. How self-love and the discussion of taboo topics can relate to personal health is illustrated by community founder Melina Haskic with the platform „Selfcare Society“.

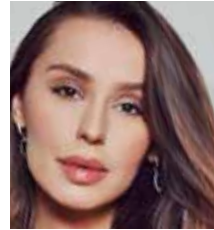
Four years ago, Melina founded a judgment-free place for people to share their thoughts about self-care. The Selfcare Society is a community-driven healthcare platform for learning, sharing and listening. The focus is on their members and their search for their optimum care routine.

„Self-care is a basic need that's important for everyone, regardless of age, gender, or background. Every person has the right to self-care. That's why I want my work to provide food for thought and suggestions for solutions, address taboo topics, clarify myths and make the topic of self-care more accessible to everyone,“ reports the founder. Melina was already working as an MFA in general medicine when she was 16. „At that point, I started thinking more about self-care. These thoughts then accompanied me for more or less my whole life. Especially during my work in the cosmetics industry and in medical cosmetology and podology, I was increasingly confronted with misinformation. So I decided to share my expertise with others to counteract this misinformation,“ she





explains. The platform includes evidence-based and practice-oriented topics from the fields of skin care, medical cosmetics and podology. During her podological training, the founder learned that foot care is often underestimated. Haskic emphasizes: „The health of our feet is crucial to our musculoskeletal system. They accompany us throughout life.“ On top of that, the Selfcare Society celebrates imperfection and seeks to be realistic. „For many people, social media contributes to a distorted ideal of body image. A majority of the beauty industry is also often irresponsible in this regard. To break existing taboos, it is first and foremost important to talk about these issues. With my platform, I want to create a safe space that didn't exist for many people before,“ says Melina. „I hope that I can increase community knowledge through my work, so that members can make better decisions for themselves in their everyday lives.“ In addition, Melina hopes that individuals will feel „heard“ through the Selfcare Society, and realize that they are not alone with their problem. Haskic has been able to learn a lot from the members herself since she launched the platform: „I could tell that as different as we are, we are largely concerned with the same issues. It shows that the topic of self-care relates to us all - regardless of age, gender or origin,“ Melina explains with a smile.

**Melina Haskic**

Medical cosmetician and founder  
of the Selfcare Society

In 2019, Melina Haskic founded the "Selfcare Society." A community platform that stands for education, transparency, genuine reviews and real results. The Selfcare Society places great importance on respectful and friendly community interaction, and discussing and normalizing taboo topics such as imperfections. Melina has always found great joy in caring for the wellness of others. Her goal is to make skin care simple and effective for everyone.

# ENGAGEMENT

The “GEHWOL Trailblazers” section offers insights into the lives of people who do amazing things, either for their feet or for foot care. These everyday heroes are often overlooked at first glance, but they shine brightly by teaching humanity and inspiring us to be the best we can be.

Once a month, Podologist Anke W. sets up her station in a primary care practice in Saarbrücken. She prepares the instruments, disinfects the treatment chair, and looks over the appointment schedule for the day ahead. The patients here are very different from the people she knows from her own practice. Those who sit in the waiting room here are usually homeless and dependent on volunteer help. For Anke W., these days are all about the podological treatment of these patients in need of help. It all started when one of the doctors and founders of the practice asked for podology support for homeless people. Anke W. was immediately on board: “For me, it was a challenge. I can help people who come into the office with pain get their foot problems under control.” In most cases, not having a roof over one’s head means irregular opportunities for personal hygiene. “Also, affected persons often only have an unsuitable pair of shoes and socks. Wetness from weather conditions, as well as deficiencies or malnutrition, can slow down the wound healing process, among other things. This in turn leads to softened skin and a risk of infection,” says the volunteer podologist. “Most patients tend to come in irregularly. In many cases, the problem is quickly resolved and requires no further treatment. “Homeless people are sometimes also passing through, and are only in one place for a few days. There are two or three people who visit me every month,” reports Anke W. When the patients feel an improvement in their problems, they are happy and relieved. “You can’t get upset if a person gives the impression that the treatment doesn’t matter to them. These people have completely different problems in their lives that they have to deal

with,” explains Anke W. Many homeless people talk about their lives during treatment and share their stories. The podologist remembers many of those emotional conversations. Some of these stories stay strong in her memory, but after 25 years in the profession, she has learned to work with the misfortunes of others. In the beginning, it was very hard for her. “I think that in jobs where you are confronted with bad situations more often, you learn to work through them faster. I also learned to simply listen without unnecessary advice. It’s just good for people.” Through her volunteer work, Anke W. takes a lot of positive things with her into her own life. “My homeless patients don’t pretend. They do not wear “everyday masks”, as we are used to doing. That makes people authentic and I like that, because then I don’t have to pretend and can be the way I am,” smiles the helper. “This volunteer work grounds me. It offers me variety, and it is a huge enrichment for my life.”

“ This experience opens new perspectives on one’s own life.”

Anke W.




# Should skin care be pH-neutral?


**Gerlach initiates the first foot care study on a controversial consultation issue for care products.**


A study involving 60 subjects including diabetic patients is investigating whether foot care products with differing pH values affect the skin's pH range and the product's care performance.


The skin's pH value and its barrier function are closely connected. In an acidic environment, a healthy skin pH value can only be maintained with an intact skin barrier. Located mainly in the outermost layer of the skin, the skin barrier (stratum corneum) protects the body from excessive water loss and from the penetration of pathogenic bacteria, germs, allergens and potentially harmful chemicals. Care products also have a pH value. This essentially depends on the product ingredients and the method of formulation for best possible efficacy. The specific pH is also important for the galenic stability of this formula. Since the product pH value can deviate slightly from the pH value of the skin, Gerlach has used scientific criteria for the first time in foot care to investigate whether deviating pH values in a care product change the natural pH value of the skin (pH 4-6), possibly providing lower quality care for the skin than "pH-neutral" products. The study - initiated by Gerlach and conducted by the proderm Institute for Dermatological Research - is intended to bring clarity to a long-controversial consultation issue important for foot care professionals in podology and cosmetics: Should foot care products be pH-neutral? The term "pH-neutral", which is often used in advertising, is problematic. This refers to products whose pH value is close to the natural pH range of skin. The skin, however, has a slightly acidic environment with a pH of 4-6.

Therefore, this means that the pH-neutral products mentioned are skin-neutral formulas. Accordingly, the study compared three preparations, all based on GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Soft Feet Cream, but with varying pH values: one product with an acidic pH (pH 4.5), one with a neutral pH (pH 6.9), and one formulation with an alkaline pH (pH 8.5). Each product was applied to different foot regions twice daily for 29 days. A fourth group used no care product at all as a control group. During and after the test phase, the product groups were examined to find out whether the pH value of the skin had changed compared to the respective baseline value, but also compared to the control group without care. In addition, the influence of the products on skin hydration and status (dryness, cracking, irritation, etc.) was reviewed as indicators of skin barrier stability. The results are impressive and confirm the hypothesis: Thanks to its buffering capacity, the skin is able to compensate for slight pH fluctuations in the short term. None of the test products (acidic, neutral, alkaline) were found to have a physiologically relevant influence on the pH value of the skin in the study. Changes - if at all, and depending on the test area - were only very slight, comparable with all products and even with the control group without care, and still clearly remained within the natural pH range of the skin at all times. Also, all products improved skin hydration and skin status without any differences, so that different pH values also did not affect their care performance.

 Product 1  
(pH acidic)

 Product 2  
(pH neutral)

 Product 3  
(pH alkaline)

 Without  
treatment

## Stable pH value

**No relevant change!**  
The pH value of the skin remains  
in the physiologically normal  
range - regardless of the  
pH value of the products!

## Better skin hydration

Hydration and skin status  
improve regardless of the pH  
of the products!

better skin moisture

Stable pH value of the skin    

29 days of use

Worse  
skin status  
without care

Natural pH range of the skin



Investigating the effect of the pH of foot care product formulations on pedal skin in diabetic and non-diabetic subjects.  
International Journal of Cosmetic Science. First published: 04 April 2023 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/ics.12861>)





# Lab Quality Procurement

Gerlach in the innovation triad

Quality is not an ingredient that can be bought and formulated into a product. That would be too easy. Quality is first and foremost the promise that a product is always available in a consistent quality. For this to work, quality must be understood as a holistic process. Research & Development design the manufacturing process to ensure consistent quality. The English term for purchasing (procurement) contains the word "care". The department ensures that all resources are available for production. The production is evaluated by the quality assurance department.





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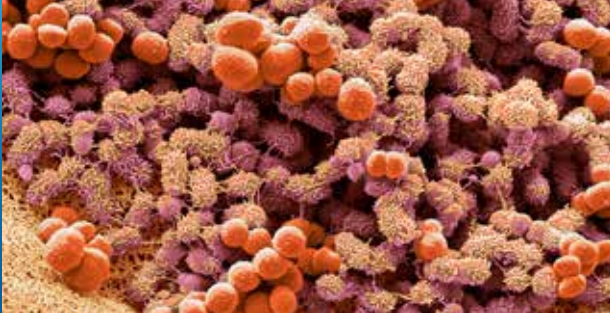
During the development of a product, the initial impetus can come from different departments: The research department has an idea for formulations that can treat a foot problem well. Marketing and sales contribute their knowledge of customer needs and care trends. Procurement, or the purchasing department, plays a major role in quality. And not only because purchasing can contribute its own innovation ideas for new products or product optimizations through its collaboration with a global supplier network. On the contrary, purchasing is one of the main guarantors of reliability. A product idea goes through many stages before it is ready for the market. First, the idea is evaluated by product management. A feasibility forecast and a business plan are developed. Only when the management gives the green light on this basis does the master plan follow: Research and development design the manufacturing process so that the innovation can always be produced and marketed with consistent quality. The concept encompasses all dimensions, starting from the complex interaction of the ingredients (galenics) to their mechanical processing, packaging and storage in the company, in the retail trade and finally by the end users. It is only through this holistic approach that quality can be developed into a new product.

Purchasing now has the task of permanently procuring the resources required for this process. The responsibility for quality is correspondingly high. If just one product component, for example an ingredient or the tube material, no longer corresponds to the concept, the product is no longer authentic. In this case, purchasing must ensure adequate replacements. Finally, quality management is another important guarantor of a product's trustworthiness. Its task is to evaluate the manufacturing process in advance. Each work step is verified before the next step follows. No ingredient goes into a product unless the quality criteria are right. No facility is involved without first qualifying in terms of the production target. No product batch leaves the company without controls. In simpler terms, one could say: Good quality management moderates the quality contributions from the individual departments, lends a certain automatism to their implementation, and ensures that quality goes where it is needed: into the retail trade, and from there to the customer.

Feeling good  
in my own  
*skin*  
Part 2: The skin microbiome

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The skin is not only our largest organ, but also protects us from external harmful influences. It is supported by billions of bacteria, fungi and viruses that colonize the surface of our skin. The totality of these little helpers is called the skin microbiome, and is part of a functioning skin barrier. Invisible to our eyes, this community of microorganisms forms a living protective shield that keeps pathogens and harmful environmental influences at bay.

**Have you ever heard of Lactobacillus, Staphylococcus or Cutibacterium? These bacterial strains are part of the microbial profile of our skin and live in a symbiotic relationship with us. While the skin provides them with a suitable habitat and sufficient nutrients, the microbiome protects the body from pathogenic germs. A well-functioning microbiome is therefore crucial for healthy skin.**

Our body is colonized by numerous microorganisms. Those that live permanently on our skin are called the skin microbiome. This is mainly composed of "good" bacteria, fungi and viruses, which most people receive from their mothers at birth. Nevertheless, the skin microbiome is different for each person, and is as individual as a fingerprint. It is influenced by age, gender and various external factors such as climate or diet. While the skin flora of babies has only a very low diversity, adults have a wide range of bacteria and other organisms on their skin. However, this can decrease again with increasing age. Temperature, humidity or pH of the skin also influence colonization: There are more and different skin microbes in moist, warm body regions such as the armpits or toe regions than in dry areas such as the elbows or shins. Herein the diversity and composition of the microbiome are crucial for its protective function. The more numerous and complex the microbes on our skin are, the more difficult it is for pathogens to spread on and in the skin. However, UV rays, excessive hygiene, antibiotics, excessive alcohol consumption, or nutrient and vitamin

deficiencies can throw this system out of balance and cause disease-triggering microbes to gain the upper hand. As a result, the skin barrier may be damaged. Germs penetrate the skin, causing itching, redness and inflammation. A disturbed microbiome can also promote skin diseases such as neurodermatitis or psoriasis. The good news: The microbiome can be strengthened, for example by providing the skin with sufficient moisture. The moister the skin, the more organisms can live on it. This can be achieved with modern probiotic cosmetics such as GEHWOL Balance Foot Cream or GEHWOL Balance Leg & Foot Lotion. Both contain an active ingredient consisting of a probiotic obtained by fermentation from the lactic acid bacterium *Lactobacillus pentosus*. Clinical studies show that *Lactobacillus* reduces transepidermal water loss to one-third and restores the skin barrier. In addition, studies have shown a significant increase in skin hydration. In addition, the probiotic component used in the products combines well with other active ingredients such as white tea and sesame oil, lending the skin even more moisture. This promotes the proliferation of the microbiome, strengthens the skin barrier, and protects against external influences.



## Lime

It is often referred to as the little green sister of the lemon. Wrongly so, because there is greatness in it. For example, twice as much juice as in a lemon. Lime also brings more flavor and is therefore a popular ingredient in cocktails and many dishes. Limes can also convince with the substances that they contain. They are a good source of vitamin C. This provides power for the immune system - ideal when a sore throat or stuffy nose develops. Other important vital substances include zinc, B vitamins, beta-carotene and bioflavonoids, which have powerful healing properties. Limes are said to have disinfecting and cancer-preventing effects, as well as relieving rheumatic complaints. Not to mention the essential oils: They have an energizing effect and immediately make you long for summer.



# SUMMER SUN FRESHNESS

Limes and mint are refreshing ingredients in cocktails and lemonades that are more than welcome on hot summer days. They also make a lot in cosmetics and provide a fresh and invigorating feeling on the skin due to their ingredients. So is this limited summer liquid from the foot care practice: the new GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet.

## Cool effect - fresh feet

As much as we love summer, high temperatures are a burden for the legs and feet. They often swell and hurt, especially after long periods of standing or sitting. A cool foot bath can provide relief. If there is no opportunity for this, foot care products with water mint, such as the new GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet, bring the necessary cooling relief. This is because the active ingredients and essential oils (including menthol) contained in water mint stimulate the skin's cold receptors. These receptors react only when the temperature decreases and give the body the sensation of cold - a desirable feature in summer heat. By the way, this effect can be enhanced if the skin care product is used ice cold from the refrigerator. Real summer fun!

## Water mint

There are about 30 species of mint. One of the oldest representatives is the water mint, from which the well-known peppermint is also descended. Water mint is native to Europe and prefers to grow in moist locations. When the leaves are crushed, it exudes a pleasant minty aroma that is slightly milder than peppermint, but just as refreshing and invigorating. Water mint contains a number of active substances such as flavonoids, phenolic acids, rosmarinic acid and, most importantly, the essential oils from which menthol is extracted. Due to its ingredients - and because it is better tolerated than peppermint - water mint has been used therapeutically for thousands of years as a medicinal plant for digestive problems, headaches and colds.

Lime and water mint extract in cosmetic products provides a variety of benefits to the skin. Limes are rich in vitamin C - an important antioxidant that protects our organism from oxidative stress and thus prevents skin damage and photoaging. In addition, vitamin C stimulates the formation of collagen, which helps to keep the skin firm and elastic. The high water content of limes, various fruit acids and energizing and moisturizing essential oils are further components that contribute to a pleasantly nourished skin sensation in cosmetics. But the main feature for many people is certainly the summery fresh scent of citrus, which immediately puts you in a good mood and provides new energy. When hot temperatures cause the feet

and legs to swell, the menthol contained in water mint is a real freshness boost. This essential oil immediately produces a pleasant cooling sensation on the skin. This is not the only reason why water mint extract is used in GEHWOL Refreshing Sorbet gel. Menthol also has antibacterial, antiseptic, detoxifying and anti-inflammatory properties and - in combination with the cooling effect - helps to relieve itching, skin irritation and inflammation. Flavonoids and phenolic acids in water mint are also good skin protectors. These are secondary plant substances that act as antioxidants to protect the skin from harmful free radicals. These molecules are created by pollution, sun exposure and other external factors, and cause the skin to age faster.

# More Me-Time!

Self-care has long been more than just a trendy term! For many people, regularly scheduled “me time” is a good balance to the otherwise stressful workday, which can quickly wear on the nerves. This makes it all the more important to recharge one’s batteries to avoid burnout. Many people find it helpful to treat their own bodies with care through a self-attentive and healthy lifestyle. This is also reflected in the current GEHWOL Foot Care Trends. 31 percent of respondents are among the so-called “self-attentive care enthusiasts.” They consciously take time for personal relaxation to do something good for their body and mind. Therefore, regular foot care is an important factor for them when it comes to self-care. They combine foot care with a positive body feeling by actively taking time for themselves. This feeling especially strengthens with age, according to the Trends.

Another characteristic of self-attentive care enthusiasts: They rarely have problems with their feet. Nevertheless, 39 percent of those who associate foot care with a positive body image see prevention as the most important aspect. For them, the focus is on prevention - that is, protection against foot problems. Those who care for their feet regularly not only increase their own well-being, but also prevent one or the other foot problem. For example, daily application of cream strengthens the skin barrier. This makes it difficult for harmful bacteria and fungi to penetrate the skin.

The GEHWOL Foot Care Trends show that awareness of prevention continues to grow among people in Germany. When choosing preparations, combinable foot care products of one brand are especially popular among women. 63 percent of 30-39 year-olds surveyed consider concept maintenance to be particularly important. No wonder: About 80 percent of people in Germany have special care rituals, and the feet also play an important role. Foot care rituals are in third place, just behind care rituals for the face and body. Almost half of the respondents use individual foot care rituals. They are primarily concerned with relaxation, efficiency, effectiveness and a sensual experience. These aspects are also generally more important for women than for men.



GEHWOL Foot Care Trends 2022/23  
n = 1,000 people in Germany aged 16 and over, online representative, April 2022 (Statista GmbH). The Trends on the Internet:  
[www.gehwol.de/Aktuelles/GEHWOL-Fusspflege Trends-2022](http://www.gehwol.de/Aktuelles/GEHWOL-Fusspflege Trends-2022)

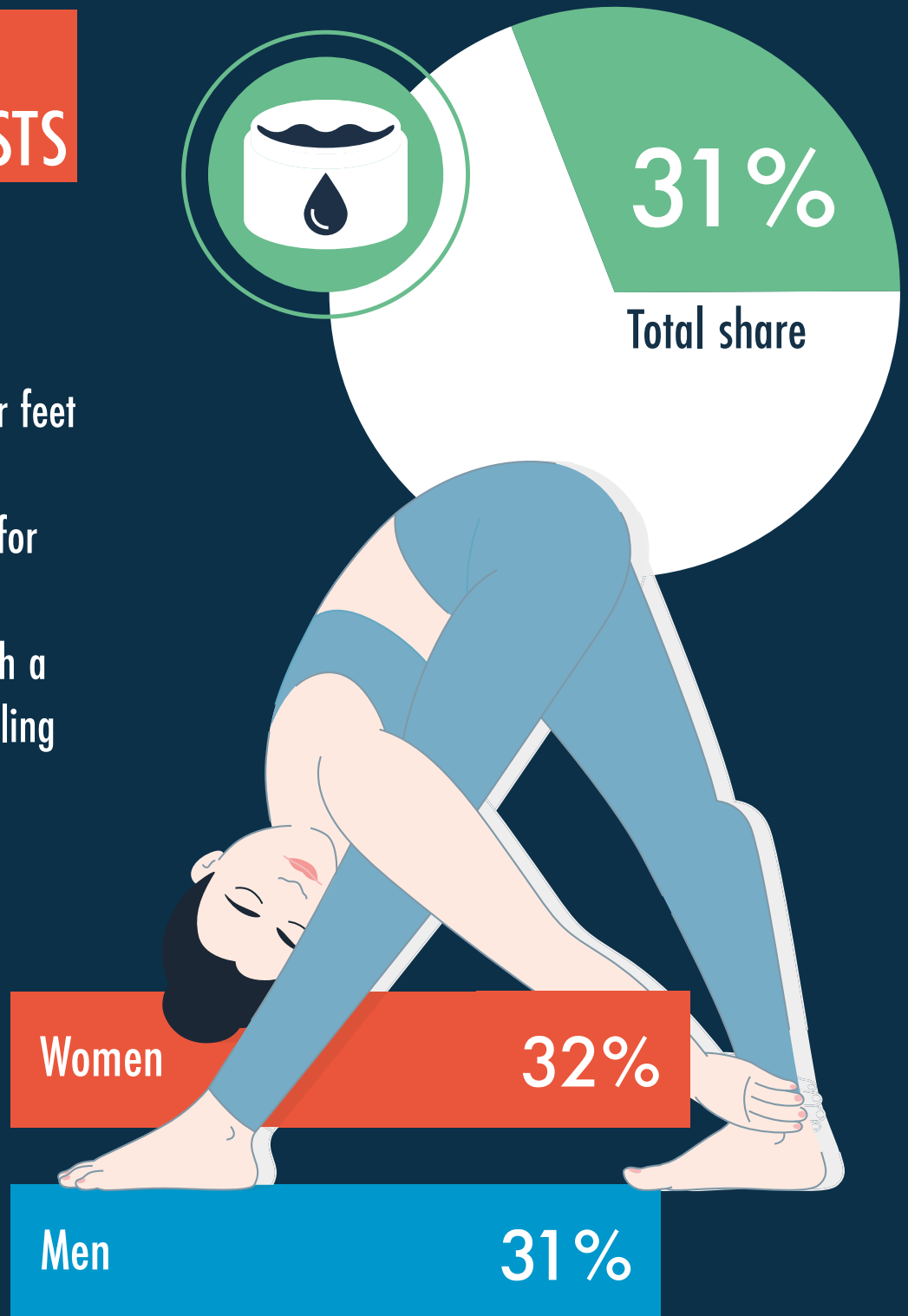
# Foot Care Trends 2023



## Mindful

## CARE ENTHUSIASTS

Take care of their feet  
as a way to do  
something good for  
themselves, and  
associate this with a  
positive body feeling



Online survey commissioned by  
GEHWOL, n = 1,000, April 2022

# Vacation souvenirs

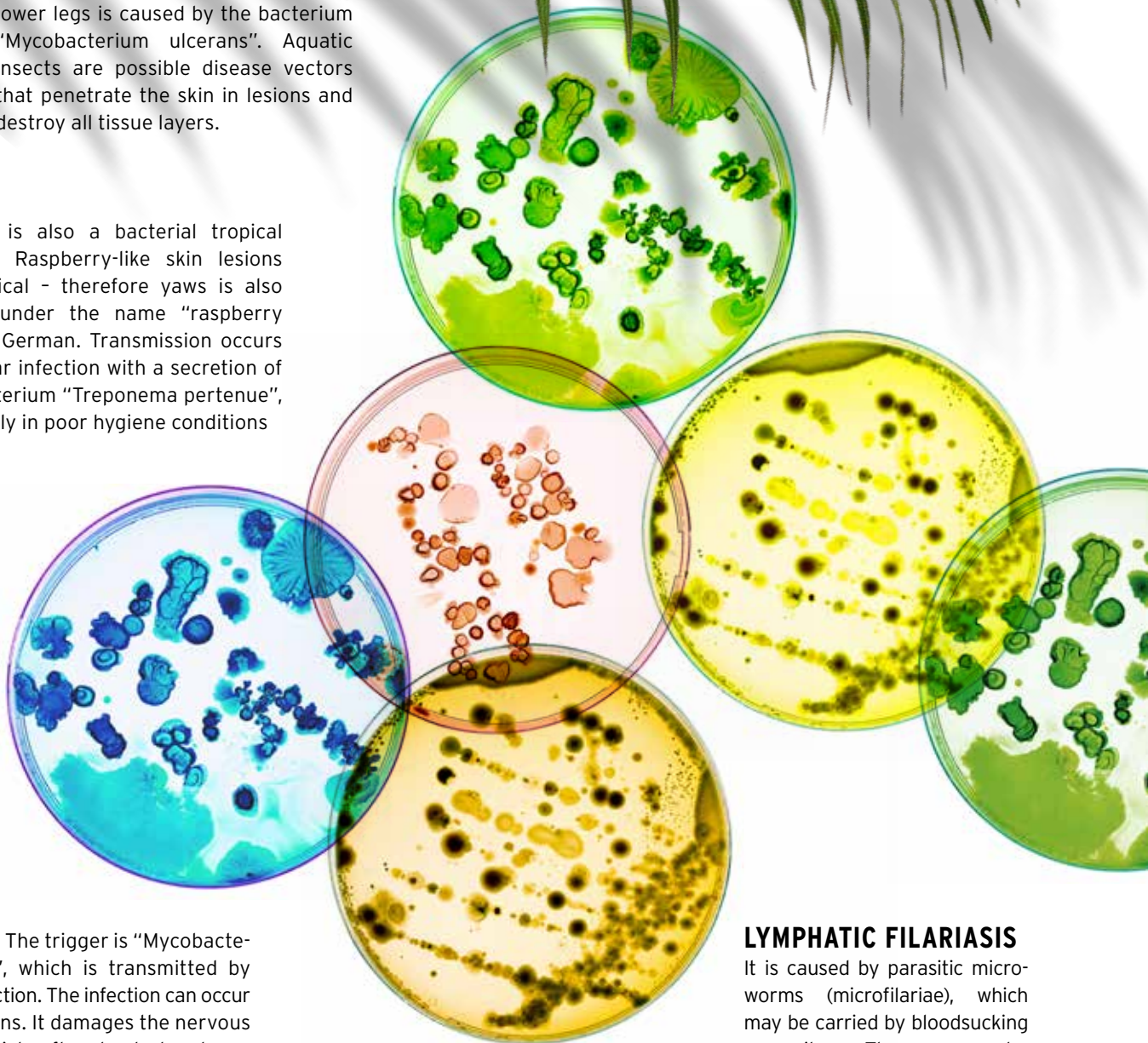
**BURULI ULCER** The chronic skin disease with ulcers on feet and lower legs is caused by the bacterium "Mycobacterium ulcerans". Aquatic insects are possible disease vectors that penetrate the skin in lesions and destroy all tissue layers.

**YAWS** is also a bacterial tropical disease. Raspberry-like skin lesions are typical - therefore yaws is also known under the name "raspberry pox" in German. Transmission occurs by smear infection with a secretion of the bacterium "Treponema pertenu", especially in poor hygiene conditions

**LEPROSY** The trigger is "Mycobacterium lepra", which is transmitted by droplet infection. The infection can occur in skin lesions. It damages the nervous system, which often leads to ulcers, necrosis, and disfigurement, especially on the feet and hands. Leprosy is nowadays well treatable with multiple medicines.

**LEISHMANIOSIS** The cutaneous form of this Mediterranean disease manifests with furuncle-like papules on the feet and lower legs. The mucocutaneous form may also affect the mucous membranes, while the visceral form may affect the organs with initial flu-like symptoms. Its triggers are parasitic protozoa transmitted by female sandflies.

**LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS** It is caused by parasitic micro-worms (microfilariae), which may be carried by bloodsucking mosquitoes. The worms colonize lymphatic vessels, tracts, and connective tissue, which can lead to massive oedema (called elephantiasis) in the legs.





## Infectious diseases on the feet: Souvenirs that no one needs!

**MYCETOMA** This tropical disease is caused by fungi (eumycetoma) or bacteria (actinomycetoma) contracted when walking barefoot. Severe courses spread from initially purulent skin nodules to muscles, bones and the nervous system.

**PODOCONIOSIS** It occurs frequently in countries with red laterite soils. Minute mineral particles of earth containing magnesium, aluminium, iron, quartz, sodium and potassium enter the skin, damage the lymphatic system and cause massive oedema.

**TUNGIASIS** This is an ectoparasitosis caused by the sand flea "Tunga penetrans". If it penetrates the skin when walking barefoot, it can cause severe itching, skin tears, papules, pustules, ulcers, discoloration, nail deformation and even superinfection with sepsis.

**SCHISTOSOMIASIS** It is the second most common tropical disease, and is caused by freshwater snails that transmit the larvae of certain sucking worms (Schistosoma). Dermatitis develops on the feet with severe itching, redness and blistering.

## Beach 101

Anyone traveling to endemic areas, i.e. vacation countries where infectious diseases are widespread, should definitely protect themselves. Immunization counselling is recommended. Skin protection products should also not be missing from your travel first-aid kit.

It does not have to be a dermatosis from the category of the described infectious diseases. An annoying case of fungal infection is already enough to spoil the vacation mood. Therefore one should never go without consistent foot care, even in a vacation paradise. Fungi, bacteria and parasites have an easy time of it when the skin is already cracked and offers entry points. Unfortunately, too much sun can do just that. UV light causes the formation of free radicals, which damage the skin barrier. Prolonged bathing in salty seawater or chlorinated pools also dries out the skin. For after-sun care of the feet, GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Soft Feet Cream (also available in a practical 40 ml travel size) is helpful. Its formula of milk and honey, hyaluronic acid and vitamin E moisturizes, promotes skin regeneration and relaxes the skin. The avocado oil in the product has a moisturizing effect.



**Dr. med. Renate Wolansky**  
Orthopaedist, sports medicine specialist and medical podiatrist.



# of



# Favourites



## What the community says

GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green is especially popular with the GEHWOL Testers' Club community in the summertime. In the warm season, the feet quickly start to sweat. Therefore, members appreciate the rapidly absorbed, refreshing care. Within the framework of various events, the GEHWOL Testers' Club has the opportunity to test various GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT products and report on them.

For Daniela (@der\_richtige\_lichtblick), GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green is an absolute must-have, especially in the hot season: "There are great ingredients in here that not only nourish, but also provide relief from sweating, blistering and itching. That's why I can't imagine my foot care routine without it." Blogger Steffi (@steffi\_trendmiss) likes to use GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green in the morning: "I use the care product especially when I need to do it quickly. It spreads easily and is absorbed immediately - my daily wake-up call for the feet." Your feet feel smooth and supple after application thanks to shea butter, jojoba oil and aloe vera. Meike (@omeikeo) prefers to apply the care product after a shower or in the evening after a stressful day. "With this, my feet can recover perfectly," the blogger reports. The scent of the cream also convinces Meike: "GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green smells of rosemary, mountain pine & lavender. The lavender and menthol scent in particular creates a relaxing atmosphere".

# saison!

# the

## What Gerlach says ■

GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green has proven itself as a caring summer companion for our community. Sunshine and good weather lure us into nature in the summer. However, long walks and hikes can quickly take their toll on the feet. Increased sweating leads to annoying odour, and the risk of foot fungus increases. GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green provides a remedy. Its special power lies in the DEOZINC® active ingredient complex, which has a 24-hour deodorant effect. The activated zinc oxide inhibits the decomposition of foot sweat by bacteria. In the course of decomposition, butyric acid is normally formed, resulting in annoying foot odour. The zinc compound zinc ricinoleate in the preparation binds the butyric acid, neutralizing it. In addition to the antimicrobial effect, GEHWOL FUSSKRAFT Green has a balanced care formula with essential oils of rosemary, mountain pine, lavender and camphor. They have deodorizing properties and a pleasant scent.





# Unmasked

