

The Patter of Little Feet... Ailments Begin During Childhood

Young, developing feet will have to carry the entire weight of the body through a lifetime, and that's a big job! Many adult foot ailments actually begin during childhood because the feet of young children are soft and pliable, allowing abnormal pressure to easily cause deformities.

Did You Know That...

Neglect of foot health in youngsters invites problems in other parts of the body including legs and back!

Foot troubles can cause a youngster to walk awkwardly, resulting in poor general posture! The growing child with foot problems may become shy and introverted, avoiding athletics and social functions!

Periodic professionals attention and regular foot care can prevent any of these problems and helps to assure a happy, active childhood.

Caring for Baby's Feet

Foot specialists consider the first year of life the most important in the development of the feet because in that year a child's feet grow very rapidly, reaching almost half their adult size. Here are some helpful hints:

□ Keep baby's feet loosely covered. Tight covers restrict movement and can hinder normal development.

□ Allow time for baby to exercise with

feet uncovered kicking and other motions are necessary preparation for eventual weight balancing.

□ Adjust baby's position several times a day. Lying too long on one position, particularly on the stomach, puts too much strain on feet and legs.

First Steps And Beyond

Those glorious first steps usually happen somewhere between ten and eighteen months. Children will walk when they are emotionally and physically ready and should never be forced to walk prematurely. Shoes are not necessary at first. In fact, going barefoot, or just socks, allow the foot to grow normally and unrestricted, and helps strengthen the musculature of the foot and the grasping ability of the toes.

When shoes enter the picture, size should be checked periodically to be certain there is room to grow. Shoes should not be handed down from one child to another because each pair of feet has its own requirements. It's a good idea to watch for excessive shoe wear in any one area.

The bones of growing feet are very flexible and can be distorted without the child's awareness, since pain is not always present. Parents should carefully oversee a child's walking patterns to spot toeing in or out, knock knees, limping gait or other abnormalities. Night leg cramps may be a sign of foot strain or mechanical imbalance. If detected early, these problems can

be corrected.

A Word To The Wise About Teenage Feet

More often than not, style does not take into consideration good habits for healthy feet, and some styles, like high heels, can do serious damage, teen lifestyles take it toll too, with athletic activities causing a myriad of twists, strains, and bruises. Teens should be encouraged to use good footwear whenever possible. Remember:

Feet continue to form until about the age 21!

Answers For The Foot Questionnaire

(Located on front cover)

1. False - Foot size changes with age, weight gain, and changes in exercise patterns.
2. True - Although back pain can arise from numerous disorders including neurological problems, tumors and kidney ailments, the most common causes of back problems relate to the way you stand, walk or otherwise use your feet.
3. False - A shin splint is an injury. The two muscles that attach to the front of your lower leg begin to pull away from the bone. The connective tissue covering the bone becomes inflamed.
4. False - A twist is not always just a twist. Sometimes muscles, tendons or ligaments are stretched or torn in the process and the foot may require tape, strapping or even a cast.
5. False - Foot imbalance is a condition in which the foot's many parts are not in proper position to support and carry body weight without undue stress.
6. True - Sometimes babies are born with inward-turned feet. This will make learning to walk difficult. Seek professional attention for early correction.
7. True - That's why proper nail care is very important!
8. False - Leather shoes are best. They are generally sturdy and unlike many synthetics, they allow your feet to "breathe".

surgery may be able to be delayed with the aid of orthotics, and following surgery these devices serve to maintain the correction.

How Do They Work?

When you walk, the heel of your foot swings ever so slightly from side to side. Upon hitting the ground, the swing stops and the arch begins to flatten. This flattening of the foot is known as pronation and the opposite movement as your heel lifts off the ground and regains its arch, is known as supination. If your heel swings too far when you walk, you are over pronating, which means your foot is flattening more than it should. Over a period of time, this can change the shape of your feet, offset the development of limbs, or cause any number of other foot problems.

Orthotics limit the swing of your heel, thereby controlling the amount of flattening of your foot. Weight bearing stress is distributed throughout your foot instead of concentrating in certain areas and the strain on soft tissue and joints is markedly reduced, as is your pain.

What are they made of?

Orthotic devices are "custom built" to conform to the desired contours of your feet and to meet your own unique needs. They are made of various materials from steel, graphite and sturdy plastics to spongy plastics, leather, foam, or cork, depending on the degree of control required.

Orthotics can be made for dress shoes, sneakers or other types of athletic shoes, and even for ski boots!

Orthotic Devices

How Do They Help?

Orthotics (also known as orthoses) are very successful medical devices used to help correct foot disorders. They are prescription appliances that improve foot movement just like eyeglasses improve vision. Orthotics are actually custom made shoe inserts that relieve your symptoms by altering and controlling the way your feet move.

Even certain hip or knee or back problems can be relieved by orthotics, which compensate for incorrect foot movement. Orthotics also help protect the tender areas of your foot from harsh, constant use. Sometimes, the need for