

# FOOTNOTES 2009

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR FALL 2009

## Five Signs Your Child May Have a Foot Problem



Foot and ankle problems in children often go unnoticed.

Signs and symptoms can be subtle, and sometimes children can't explain what's wrong.

But it's important to protect

growing feet and have problems checked out early. If your child shows any of the following symptoms, make an appointment with our office for an examination.

**Your kids can't keep up with their peers**— We've found that if a child lags behind in sports or backyard play, it may be because of tired feet or legs. Fatigue is common when children have flat feet. The muscles in the feet and legs tire easily because the feet are not functioning as well as they should.

**Children voluntarily withdraw from activities they usually enjoy**—If they are reluctant to participate, it may be due to heel pain — a problem we often see in children between the ages of 8 and 14. Repetitive stress from sports may cause muscle strain and inflammation of the growth plate, a weak area at the back of a child's heel.

**They don't want to show you their feet**—Children may feel pain or notice a change in the appearance of their feet or nails but don't tell their parents because they fear a trip to the doctor's office. Make it a habit to inspect your child's feet starting at a young age. Any changes, such as calluses, growths, skin discoloration, or redness and swelling around the toenails warrant a visit to our office.

**Your child often trips and falls**—Repeated clumsiness may be a sign of in-toeing, balance problems or neuromuscular conditions. We can evaluate your child's feet and legs to help determine the cause of the problem.

**Your child complains of pain**—Remember, it is never normal for a child to have foot pain. Injuries may seem minor, but if pain or swelling last more than a few days, have your child's foot examined. 🍀

## Enjoying Fall Walks

The cooler fall weather is the perfect time to take walks around the neighborhood, in the woods or a park to soak in the beautiful changing colors. Don't let foot pain or an injury stop you from enjoying the change of season.

**Wear appropriate shoes.** Walking on uneven terrain can be strenuous on your feet. When taking long hikes in the woods or in the park, a well-constructed hiking boot is best to support your feet, prevent muscle and tendon strain, and help prevent ankle sprain injuries.

**The right socks can help prevent blisters and fungal infections.** If the weather is wet and cold, our office recommends synthetic socks to keep feet dry and reduce blister-causing friction. If a second layer is needed, wool socks add warmth, absorb moisture and provide comfort.

**Don't ignore pain.** If your feet or ankles start to hurt on a walk or hike, take notice. Pain usually occurs from overuse and fatigue. Start with shorter walks and build yourself up to longer hikes to prevent injury. If pain continues or seems unusual, make an appointment with our office for an exam.

Enjoy the beauty of the season and know that our office is here to help with any foot and ankle issues that may arise. 🍀



# Do You or a Family Member have Diabetes?

November is American Diabetes Month, and a good time to remind those with the disease about the importance of foot care. Diabetes can be dangerous to your feet— even a small cut can cause serious problems. It's important to take time to care for your feet by following these simple daily care tips.

**Inspect Your Feet Daily**—Check for blisters, redness, cuts, swelling or nail problems. If you have trouble seeing the bottom of your feet, use a hand mirror or ask a family member to inspect them for you. If you notice anything abnormal, call our office to have it checked out.

**Wash Your Feet in Lukewarm Water**—Wash your feet daily with a soft washcloth or sponge in lukewarm water, not hot water. Be sure to dry by patting or blotting and carefully dry between your toes.

**Moisturize Daily**—With the cooler temperatures of fall, it is even more important to moisturize your feet daily to prevent your skin from itching and cracking. Don't use moisturizer between the toes, where it can lead to skin breakdown and infection.

**Cut Nails Carefully**—Cut nails straight across and don't cut them too short. Nails cut too short can lead to ingrown toe nails.

**Never Treat Corns or Calluses on Your Own**—If you have corns, calluses or severely dry skin on your feet, make an appointment with our office and we can help.

**Wear Clean, Dry Socks**—Change your socks daily. Avoid tight elastic bands and thick or bulky socks that can fit poorly and irritate the skin.

**Schedule Regular Foot Exams**—Regular foot exams help to prevent foot complications of diabetes before they start. 🦶

