SUMMER 2019

FootNotes

Healthy Feet for an Active Life

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Keep Your Kids' Feet & Ankles Safe This Summer

While your kids may love to go barefoot during the summer, doing so may expose their feet to numerous potential injuries that can ruin the rest of the season for them. Follow these tips to keep your kids on their feet all summer long.

1. Protect against puncture wounds.

What lies hidden in the grass, dirt or sand can wreak havoc on bare feet. Nails, shards of glass, discarded toothpicks, slivers of wood, pieces of seashell at the beach or thorns from trees and plants can puncture the skin of the foot and cause serious injury. Even after the object is completely removed from the foot, any dirt or bacteria pushed into the puncture wound can lead to an infection, painful scarring or even a cyst. Any puncture wounds should be treated promptly by a foot and ankle surgeon within 24 hours.

2. Be cautious around bicycles and lawnmowers.

Besides the hidden dangers, "everyday kid injuries" can also interrupt a summer break. Protect your kids' feet and ankles from traumatic injuries caused by bicycles and lawnmowers by making sure they wear sturdy shoes while riding a bike or when cutting the grass.



3. Apply sunscreen to the tops and bottoms of their feet.

Feet, like shoulders, burn faster than the rest of the body since they are more perpendicular to the sun's harmful rays. Not only is sunburn of the feet painful, it can also cause skin cancers that often go unnoticed until they become serious.

Contact your local foot and ankle surgeon for more sensible safety tips to keep your kids' feet and ankles safe this summer. To find a foot and ankle surgeon in your area, visit FootHealthFacts.org.

Get Your Feet Ready for Sandal Season

Seeing your feet exposed in sandals this summer may raise questions about what could be ailing your feet. Here are some common conditions to watch for and guidance on when to consult a foot and ankle surgeon for proper treatment.

1. Bunion
If you have a bump on the side of your big toe, it could be a bunion. Bunions are often genetic; however, improper shoes, such as high heels or shoes with a tight toe box, can cause bunions to become painful or to progress. Treatment may only require monitoring your feet and making modest modifications to your footwear, or depending on the bunion's severity, surgery may be the best option.

2. Hammertoe
Hammertoe is a bending deformity of one or both joints of your toes. This abnormal bending can put pressure on the toe when wearing shoes. Hammertoes should receive prompt attention because of their progressive nature. They do not improve without some kind of intervention.

3. Melanoma
Melanoma (the deadliest type of skin cancer) is the type of skin cancer most frequently found on the feet. If you notice an abnormal freckle or mole anywhere on your foot, even under your toenail, it is best to have a foot and ankle surgeon evaluate it.

4. Haglund's Deformity
If you notice a painful bony enlargement on the back of your heel, it could be a Haglund's deformity. The soft tissue near the Achilles tendon becomes irritated when the bony enlargement rubs against shoes. This often leads to painful bursitis, which is an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac between the tendon and the bone—the bursa. A foot and ankle surgeon can can treat a Haglund's deformity nonsurgically, but when conservative methods fail, surgery may be needed to relieve pain.

5. Tailor's Bunion
While most people have heard of the most common type of bunion, which is near the big toe, another type of bunion is the tailor's bunion or bunionette, which occurs near the little toe. If you notice a painful bump at the base of your little toe, it could be a tailor's bunion. A foot and ankle surgeon can provide you with conservative methods of treatment as well as surgical options to help alleviate the pain.

No matter your foot ailments, for best results, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to locate one near you.



Are Popular Sandals Causing Foot Problems in Men?



Footwear has come a long way since Roman armies conquered an empire wearing only sandals on their feet. But what is old is new again, as more and more men make sandals their summer footwear of choice.

Along with the growing popularity of men's sandals come more aches and pains for male feet. The wrong sandal could cause problems, including heel pain, Achilles tendonitis, pain in the big toe and even breaks and stress fractures in the foot.

If you are shopping for a man sandal—or "mandal" as some people call it—look for a sturdy, cushioned, supportive sole and padded straps. Men living with diabetes should consult a foot and ankle surgeon before wearing sandals.

MRSA Infection Linked to Common Foot Conditions

More Americans are developing drug-resistant staph infections, known as MRSA, from common, relatively minor foot problems, such as cuts, cracks in the skin, athlete's foot and ingrown toenails.

Staph bacteria, such as MRSA, are common. One in three people carry them. The bacteria live on the skin and in the nose and are spread through skin contact. Even minor tears in the skin's surface open the door to bacteria and infection. Skin conditions, such as athlete's foot, calluses, corns, eczema and psoriasis, can create breaks in the skin. Walking barefoot increases the risk of cuts and puncture wounds.

Foot and ankle surgeons say simple steps can help prevent MRSA infections:

- Wash and bandage cuts.
- See a doctor within 24 hours for any puncture wound.
- Never perform "bathroom surgeries" to cut or dig out an ingrown toenail.
- Keep your feet clean and dry to prevent fungal infections, such as athlete's foot.

If you have or cut or scrape on your foot that is infected and not healing in a timely fashion, schedule an appointment as soon as possible with a foot and ankle surgeon. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to find one in your neighborhood.

