

Foot Notes

FALL 2011

HEALTHY FEET FOR AN ACTIVE LIFE

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Yard Cleanup Can Be Tough On Feet

Fall is the time to clear out the remains of summer gardens from the yard. Keep your feet and ankles safe from injury by following these helpful tips.

► **Wear appropriate shoes for the task.**

No matter how warm it is, don't wear sandals. Wear sturdy leather shoes with support to protect your feet from sharp objects, including the blades of power equipment.

► **Keep children away from power equipment.**

Protect your kids and others from severe trauma. Leaf blowers, power lawn mowers and chain saws should not be left out where kids are playing or where other inexperienced users can have access.

► **Don't work on wet surfaces.**

Don't work on wet surfaces. Ankle sprains and fractures can easily occur from slipping on wet grass or leaves, especially when carrying heavy loads across the yard.

► **Remember, yard work is workout!**

Before starting your yard work, warm up and perform stretching exercises, just as you would before working out at the gym. By stretching prior to activity, you can help avoid stressing muscles and tendons in the foot, ankle and calves.



Enjoy the beautiful fall season but be sure to protect your feet and ankles from yard-work injuries and mishaps.

Are Your Kids Overdoing Sports?

Fall not only means time to go back to school, it is also a time when kids' sports teams get back into action. Many young people are involved in several sports during a given season and it's not uncommon for a child to attend practices for two different sports in one day.

If your children are involved in sports activities—especially those that are hard on their feet such as soccer, basketball, track and football—it's important that you are the lookout for “overuse injuries.” Kids' bones, ligaments and tendons in their feet and ankles are not fully developed yet, and damage can occur when they are stressed from hours of sports activities. Problems FROM OVERUSE that can occur when kids' feet are involved in a lot of activities include:

Help Your Child Avoid Overuse Injuries

• Use the correct shoe for each type of sport. Basketball shoes will protect the feet and ankles in the side to side motions of that sport, while running shoes cushion and stabilize the foot from repeated pounding on the track.

• Appropriate stretching and warm up for all sports activities should be done to help prevent injury.

• If your child is overweight, help him or her to shed some pounds. Extra weight puts additional stress on the feet.

• Limit wearing cleated shoes to the time actually spent on the field. Cleated shoes do not provide adequate support and may cause increased pressure on the soles of the feet.

• Make sure shoes are well-constructed and support the foot adequately. Have them professional fitted.

► **Calcaneal apophysitis** - an inflammation of the heel's growth plate due to muscle strain and repetitive stress.

► **Achilles tendonitis** - an inflammation of the tendon connecting the heel bone to the calf muscle.

► **Stress fractures** - hairline breaks resulting from repeated stress on the bone.

► **Sprains** - ankles can turn in when ankle ligaments and muscles are weakened or fatigued.

► **Shin Splints** - inflammation of the muscle attachment along the bone of the shin occurs because of fatigue due to overuse, improper shoe wear, and the change of playing fields from one sport to another.

Remember, pain is NEVER normal in a child's foot or ankle. Some kids may insist on playing their sport even when they're in pain. Parents should not allow this to happen. Continuing to play with an injury can result in serious injuries that can follow your child into adulthood.

Best rule of thumb: If your child has any pain in their foot that lasts longer than a few days, or that is severe enough to limit the child's walking or playing a sport, he or she should be evaluated in our office.



Take Control of Diabetes

November is American Diabetes Month...a good time to remind any family members with this disease that good foot care must be a part of their overall treatment regimen. Circulatory and nerve damage problems caused by diabetes can leave patients with serious foot ulcers and other conditions that, left untreated, can result in amputation.

Help keep your family members on their feet! Anyone with diabetes should follow these guidelines:

- 1) *Inspect your feet daily. Check for cuts, blisters, redness, swelling or nail problems. Call our office to schedule an appointment if you notice any changes in your foot or ankle.*
- 2) *Moisturize your feet. Use a moisturizer to keep dry skin from itching or cracking. But DON'T moisturize between the toes—this can lead to increased moisture and may cause a fungal infection or rubbing between the toes.*
- 3) *Keep your feet warm and dry. Don't get your feet wet in snow or rain. Wear warm socks and shoes in the winter.*
- 4) *Have your feet checked in our office at least once a year or more often if poor blood flow to the foot or nerve damage is present.*

