

# FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

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## COOL FOR BACK-TO-SCHOOL: FOOT-FRIENDLY TIPS FROM TODAY'S PODIATRIST



### DO YOU KNOW YOUR 1-2-3s?

Examine your child's shoe with the  
**1-2-3 test:**

- 1** **Look for a stiff heel.** Press on both sides of the heel counter. It shouldn't collapse.
- 2** **Check toe flexibility.** The shoe should bend with your child's toes. It shouldn't be too stiff or bend too much in the toe-box area.
- 3** **Select a shoe with a rigid middle.** Does your shoe twist? Shoes should never twist in the middle.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL IS AN EXCITING TIME FOR PARENTS AND KIDS, BUT BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING CAN BE ANOTHER STORY. LET TODAY'S PODIATRIST HELP TAKE SOME OF THE STRESS AWAY WITH THESE SEVEN HELPFUL SHOE-SHOPPING TIPS!

- 1. Children's Feet Change With Age.** Shoe and sock sizes may change every few months as a child's feet grow.
- 2. Shoes That Don't Fit Properly Can Aggravate The Feet.** Always measure a child's feet before buying shoes, and watch for signs of irritation.
- 3. Never Hand Down Footwear.** Just because a shoe size fits one child comfortably doesn't mean it will fit another the same way. Also, sharing shoes can spread fungi like athlete's foot and nail fungus.
- 4. Examine The Heels.** Children may wear through the heels of shoes quicker than they outgrow the shoes. Uneven heel wear can indicate a foot problem that should be checked by a podiatrist.
- 5. Take Your Child Shoe Shopping.** Every shoe fits differently. Letting a child have a say in the shoe-buying process promotes healthy foot habits down the road.
- 6. Always Buy For The Larger Foot.** Feet are seldom precisely the same size.
- 7. Buy Shoes That Do Not Need a "Break-In" Period.** Shoes should be comfortable immediately. Also make sure to have your child try on shoes with socks or tights, if that's how they'll be worn.

## KEEP YOUR CHILD'S FEET HAPPY & HEALTHY AS THEY GROW

Whether it is a precious baby's first steps or a quick-maneuvering teenager's winning soccer goal, healthy feet and sure-footedness make milestones in a child's life possible. Starting at birth, paying close attention to your little one's feet from proper grooming to gait will ensure a solid foundation as your youngster grows. After all, their feet are meant to last a lifetime! Here are some suggestions to help ensure normal development as your child grows:

### INFANCY (birth to 1 year)

- Look carefully at your baby's feet. A child's feet grow rapidly during the first year. Podiatrists consider this period to be the most critical stage of the foot's development. If you notice something that does not look normal to you, contact a podiatrist.
- Keep your baby's feet unrestricted. No shoes or booties are necessary for infants. Footwear can restrict movement and can inhibit toes and feet from normal development.
- Provide an opportunity for exercising the feet. Lying uncovered enables the baby to kick and perform other related motions that prepare the feet for weight bearing.



### TODDLER (1–3 years)

- Keep bare feet indoors. Walking barefoot allows your toddler's foot to grow normally and to develop its musculature and strength, as well as the grasping action of toes.
- Assess your child's walking pattern or gait. It is not uncommon for little ones to walk on their toes. However, persistent toe-walking is not normal. A podiatrist can examine a child to make a proper diagnosis and determine the best treatment option.
- Pay attention to unspoken signs. If your child is limping, tripping, or always wants to remove one or both shoes, these actions may be an unspoken sign that the shoes don't fit properly.



### YOUNG CHILD (4–8 years)

- Take your child shoe shopping. It's important to have your child's feet measured before buying shoes.
- Never hand down footwear. Just because a shoe size fits one child comfortably doesn't mean it will fit another the same way.
- Establish good outdoor footwear practices. Wear flip-flops around the pool and in the locker room to prevent bacterial infections. Make sure winter boots fit properly. Kids should be able to wiggle their toes, but boots should immobilize the heel, instep, and ball of the foot to help prevent blisters, chafing, and ankle or foot injuries.



### PRETEEN (9–12 years)

- Play it safe with sports. Sports-related foot and ankle injuries become common as children start participating in athletic activities. Contact your family podiatric physician if you notice a sports injury.
- Promote healthy pedicures. It's important your child learn how to trim and polish nails safely. Visit [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org) to see a "Pedicure Pointers" tip sheet.
- Buy shoes that do not need a "break-in" period. Properly fitted shoes should never require a "break-in" period.

