

Parents: Avoid kids' foot problems with the right shoes

Before you head to the shoe shop to buy your kids shoes, follow these helpful guidelines to prevent or minimize foot problems from poorly fitting or worn out shoes.

Shoes should fit

Your child's feet can grow up to two sizes in six months, so you need to account for growth when buying shoes. That doesn't mean you should buy shoes that are too big—oversized shoes cause the foot to slide forward, putting excessive pressure on the toes. A good fit is about a finger's width from the end of the shoe to the tip of the big toe.

Tight shoes can cause blisters, corns and calluses on your child's toes, blisters on the back of the heels or worse, ingrown nails, which can become infected. Signs of infection from ingrown nails include pain, redness or fluid draining from the area. If you notice any of these symptoms, schedule an appointment with your Podiatrist, who can perform the correct treatment for your child.



Shoes wear out

Shoes lose their shock absorption over time, so inspect new and old shoes for proper cushioning and arch support. Replace any shoes with wear and tear around the edges of the sole. When buying shoes, check to see that the toe box flexes easily and the shoe doesn't bend in the middle of the sole.

Worn-out shoes elevate the risk for heel pain, Achilles tendonitis and even ankle sprains and stress fractures.

Children with flat feet

Children with flat feet need shoes with a wide toe box, maximum arch support and shock absorption. The best shoes to buy are lace-up shoes that have enough depth for an orthotic insert, if necessary.