

FOOTNOTES 2003

N E W S Y O U C A N U S E

FALL 2003


Parents... Watch Your Children's Feet!

After a summer of sandals and bare feet, children are back in shoes for school this fall. Now, more than ever, parents need to watch their children's feet for any changes that may signal problems.

Take a few minutes to watch your child performing everyday activities such as walking, running and playing sports. An irregular gait, frequent stumbling or limping can signal a problem. "Tired" legs, night pains and cramping are also signs to watch for, as is uneven wear on the soles of the shoes.

The earlier foot and ankle problems are detected and corrected, the better. This is particularly true for children

because they are still growing. If you notice any of these changes, make an appointment to visit our office for evaluation and diagnosis.

We want your child to be able to fully participate in and enjoy all of the activities the new school year offers! 



Parents, Don't Forget!

Sometimes children like a particular pair of shoes so much that they won't tell you when they've become too tight. Check that "favorite" pair of shoes to make sure your child has not outgrown them! Tight shoes can cause many problems including ingrown nails, calluses and blisters.

Do Arches Really Fall?

Many adults complain of having painful feet due to "fallen arches." But is it true that years of wear and tear on the feet can actually cause arches to flatten over time?

Flatfoot in adults is a complex disorder, with varying symptoms and degrees of severity. Although there are several types of flatfoot, they all have one characteristic in common — partial or total collapse of the arch.

Adult flexible flatfoot, one of the most common types of flatfoot, is the clinical condition often referred to as

"fallen arches." Adult flexible flatfoot typically begins in childhood or adolescence and continues into adulthood. The condition usually occurs in both feet and generally progresses in severity throughout the adult years. As the deformity worsens, soft tissues (tendons and ligaments) of the arch may stretch or tear and can become inflamed, causing pain.

Older men and women who have been active most of their lives, particularly in occupations that require standing or walking most of the time, are at greatest risk for adult flexible flatfoot. In

addition, adults who are overweight frequently suffer from this condition.

Symptoms that often accompany adult flexible flatfoot include:

- Pain in the heel, arch, ankle, or along the outside of the foot
- "Turned-in" ankle
- Pain associated with a shin splint
- General weakness/fatigue in the foot or leg

In the later stages of adult flexible flatfoot, arthritis may develop to such a point that the arch and foot become stiff. Therefore, early detection is advised. If you suffer from any of these painful symptoms, call our office to schedule an appointment for definitive diagnosis and

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Dangerous Melanomas Develop on Feet, Too!

Malignant melanoma, a serious form of skin cancer, is increasing faster than any other cancer. In the United States, some 40,000 new cases of cutaneous malignant melanoma (melanoma of the skin) are diagnosed every year and the disease accounts for up to 10,000 deaths annually.

Did you know that melanoma is the most common type of foot malignancy? Studies show that melanomas located on the foot are more likely to be misdiagnosed than melanomas located elsewhere on the body. In addition, melanomas located on the foot are often more dangerous simply because they go undetected and untreated longer than melanomas in easier to spot locations such as the face or arm.

Melanomas can be found anywhere on the foot, including under a toenail. They most often appear as

pigmented lesions. Risk factors may be similar to other skin cancers, such as excessive unprotected sun exposure, family history of skin cancer, numerous moles on the body and having fair skin, blue eyes or red hair. Even populations normally at low risk for skin cancer, such as blacks, Hispanics and Asians, can develop melanomas on their feet.

Patients need to be vigilant in checking their feet carefully for evidence of skin cancer. If you notice any pigmented or unusual lesion on your foot (even under a toenail or on the bottom of your feet) make an appointment immediately with our office. To be safe, moles or lesions on the feet that change color and shape need to be removed and biopsied. Left untreated, melanomas can spread to other organs and are often fatal. 

Think “ABCD” to Detect Melanomas

- A Asymmetry** – The shape of one half does not match the other.
- B Border irregular** – The edges are often ragged, notched, blurred or irregular in outline, and the pigment may spread to the surrounding area.
- C Color** – The color is uneven or varies from one area to another. Shades of black, brown and tan may be present. Areas of white, red, pink, grey or blue may be seen.
- D Diameter** – Melanomas are usually larger than the eraser of a pencil (6mm).

Fallen Arches *from page 1*

treatment. There are many treatment options available to relieve the painful symptoms of adult flexible flatfoot and improve foot function. We can recommend a treatment course based on the severity of your condition, your age, your activity level and other factors. 