

# FOOTNOTES 2004

NEWS YOU CAN USE FOR FALL 2004

## Are Your Kids Overdoing Sports?

Fall means more than "back to school" for kids: it's also the time when sports teams get back into action. Many young people are involved in several sports each season. It's not uncommon for one child to attend practices for two different sports on the same afternoon.

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 be on the lookout for "overuse injuries." The bones, ligaments, and tendons in kids' feet and ankles aren't fully developed yet, and damage can occur when they are stressed from hours of sports participation.

Problems that can occur when kids' feet take a beating include:

**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

**Tendo-Achilles bursitis**—an inflammation of the fluid-filled sac located between the Achilles tendon and the heel bone

**Plantar fasciitis**—an inflammation of the band of tissue that runs along the bottom of the foot from the heel to the toes

**Stress fractures**—hairline breaks resulting from repeated stress on the bone

Some kids will insist on continuing to play their sport even when they're in pain. Parents should never allow this to happen! Continuing to play with an injury can result in problems that may plague your child into adulthood.

Pain is NEVER normal in a child's foot or ankle! Any pain that lasts more than a few days, or that is severe enough to limit the child's walking, should be evaluated in our office. 🐾

### Help Your Child to Avoid Overuse Injuries

- Provide 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 a track.
- NEVER allow a child to use hand-me-down shoes!
- Make sure shoes are well-constructed and support the foot adequately. Have them professionally fitted.
- Limit wearing of cleated shoes to the time actually spent on the field. These shoes are not supportive, and cleats may cause increased pressure on soles of the feet.
- Avoid activities that are beyond your child's ability.
- If your child is overweight, help him or her to shed pounds. Extra weight puts additional stress on the feet.



### Does Someone in Your Household Have Diabetes?

An estimated 18.2 million Americans have diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. The effects of this disease can cause severe problems in the feet of diabetes patients.

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. In fact, about 82,000 lower-limb amputations are performed each year among people with diabetes.

Help keep your family members on their feet! Anyone with diabetes should inspect their feet daily, and have them checked in our office at least once a year...more often if poor blood flow to the foot or nerve damage is present. 🐾

# It's True! Your Feet Can Hurt Your Back!

If your lower back has been hurting, and you don't remember doing anything that would have injured it, the source of your pain could be your feet!



Foot pain is something that many folks just try to ignore. After all, don't everyone's feet hurt now and then? But if foot pain is something that has been with you for quite awhile, it could be causing problems in your ankles, knees, hips, and even your back.

That old song, "the leg bone's connected to the thigh bone...the thigh bone's connected to the hip bone" tells the whole story. Our bodies are like a chain, with one link, or bone, connecting at the joint to another link. Think about what would happen if the first link in the chain was out of position. The point at which it meets the next link would eventually overstress the link and adversely affect the entire chain.

That's what happens when we have foot pain. If the normal way of walking is painful, we instinctively change our walking pattern. Perhaps we have arthritis, and our big toe joint hurts. So, we change our gait to avoid bending the joint when we walk. But changing our gait will change the mechanics of our ankle joint, eventually causing pain there. This change in our walking pattern can also affect the whole chain of our lower body... from the ankle, to the knee, to the hip, and then to the lower back.

When foot pain or a foot deformity causes us to change the way we walk, it changes the way that the bones of all of those other joints move with each other. Cartilage in the joints can wear down, ligaments and tendons can be stressed beyond their normal range, and arthritis can set in.

If your feet aren't working right, don't ignore them! Make an appointment with our office for an evaluation. Your back (and knees and hips) will thank you! 🍌