



For Immediate Release

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BACK TO SCHOOL SHOE SHOPPING
Tips from the MPMA

Lansing, Mich. - During the back-to-school time frame and throughout the year, one of the most important purchases on any parent's shopping list should be a pair of proper fitting shoes for their child. The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) would like to share several important factors that parents should consider while shopping:

- **Children's Feet Change with Age.** Shoe and sock sizes may change every few months as a child's feet grow.
- **Shoes That Don't Fit Properly Can Aggravate the Feet.** Always measure the child's feet before buying shoes, and watch for signs of irritation.
- **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.
- **Examine the Heels.** Children may wear through the heels of their shoes quicker than outgrowing shoes themselves. Uneven heel wear can indicate a foot problem that should be checked by a podiatrist.
- **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.
- **Always Buy for the Larger Foot.** Feet are seldom precisely the same size.
- **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.
- **Consider Closed Toe Shoes.** Covering the child's toes allows for more protection.

Do A Child's Shoes "Make The Grade?"

- **Look For a Stiff Heel.** Press on both sides of the heel counter. It shouldn't collapse.
- **Check Toe Flexibility.** The shoe should bend with a child's toes. It shouldn't be too stiff or bend too much in the toe box area.
- **Select a Shoe With a Rigid Middle.** Does the shoe twist? A shoe should never twist in the middle
- **Are the shoes secure on the foot?** Laces or Velcro are best to hold the foot in place.

Additional Advice for Parents

- Foot problems noticed at birth will not disappear by themselves. Do not wait until a child gets older to fix a problem! Foot problems in youth can lead to greater problems down the road.
- If there are concerns about the way a child is walking, get him/her checked by a podiatrist. A lack of complaint by a youngster is not a reliable sign that there is no problem.
- Going barefoot is a healthy activity for children under the right conditions. However, walking barefoot on dirty pavement can expose children's feet to the dangers of infection through accidental cuts and to severe contusions, sprains or fractures. Plantar warts, a virus on the sole of the foot, can also be contracted.

- Children’s sports-related injuries are on the rise. A child’s visit to a podiatrist can help determine any concerns there may be regarding the child participating in specific sports and help identify the activities that may be best suited for the individual child. Protective taping of the ankles may be recommended to help prevent sprains and fractures.

For more foot health information and to find a local podiatrist, visit: MPMA.org.

For a video clip of this information, visit [Buying Children’s Shoes](#) on the MPMA page of YouTube.

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About the MPMA:

The Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) has been dedicated to serving and protecting the public's podiatric health and maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct among its members for over 100 years. The four main objectives of the organization are: to improve the quality of foot care; to promote the importance of foot health among the general public and health care professionals throughout the state; to increase awareness of the art and science of podiatric medicine and surgery; and to provide continuing medical education to podiatrists. www.mpma.org

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