



For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Morrisroe, 248.666.3897
cmorrisroe@comcast.net

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SUMMER FOOT INJURIES IN CHILDREN
MPMA Shares Advice

Lansing, Mich. - Millions of American children will participate in warm weather sports this summer, from softball to soccer and swimming to cycling. The podiatrists of the Michigan Podiatric Medical Association (MPMA) share that no matter what their sport or whether they play competitively or just for fun, they will have one important thing in common: They'll need their feet to be pain-free if they're going to play their best and prevent injuries.

"Sports play a significant role in the lives of children," said Dr. Jodie Sengstock, MPMA Director of Professional Relations. "Parents need to be aware that sports, which require a substantial amount of running, turning, and contact, can translate to injuries. Protecting children's feet from injuries, and bringing them to a podiatrist when problems occur, can help keep kids stay in the game and make the sport more enjoyable."

The MPMA offers some tips for helping protect children's feet while playing warm-weather sports:

- Protective taping of the ankles is often necessary to help prevent sprains or fractures.
- Buying a shoe designed for the specific sport not only improves a child's performance in the sport, but it also can help protect him or her from serious foot and ankle injuries.
- Do not assume that last year's shoe will fit properly. Previously worn shoes should also be checked for wear that may impede their effectiveness.
- Without the right sock, even the best athletic shoe won't score points—on the field or off. Athletic socks should consist of a natural/synthetic blend, which is best at wicking away moisture and minimizing foot odor. Socks should not have large seams that might cause blisters or irritation.

Commonly played warm-weather sports and the risks associated with them include:

- Basketball - Children playing basketball may be at risk for ankle sprains, tendinitis, and plantar fasciitis (inflammation of the thick band of tissue on the sole of the foot). To minimize the risk of foot injury, choose a shoe with a thick, stiff sole, high ankle support, and shock absorption.
- Tennis - The rapid, repetitive lateral movements and shifting of weight required of tennis players can lead to injuries such as ankle sprains, plantar fasciitis, and corns or calluses. Tennis players will do best with a flexible-soled shoe that supports both sides of the foot.
- Running - Movements required of runners include leg extension and hitting the balls of the feet with a great deal of force. Running can lead to shin splints, heel pain, and blisters. A good running shoe should offer good support and shock absorption. In some cases, custom orthotics may be necessary to provide additional support and control of foot motion.

- Soccer - The running, jumping, and lateral movements required of soccer players can lead to many foot injuries, with heel pain and shin splints being among the most common. Soccer shoes should provide multiple cleats in the heel area and enough room for thick soccer socks.

“Sports-related foot and ankle injuries are on the rise as more children participate actively in sports,” said Dr. Sengstock. “Parents need to be vigilant to ensure children’s feet remain healthy and safe. And remember—lack of complaint by a child is not a reliable sign that everything is fine. The bones of growing feet are so flexible that they can be twisted and distorted without the child being aware of it.”

If a child participates in strenuous sports, his or her foot health should be monitored closely. When a problem is suspected, take the child to an MPMA podiatrist for evaluation and treatment.

To find an MPMA podiatrist nearby, visit www.MPMA.org.

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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