

# Foot Health Facts on Children's Foot Conditions



Pain in a child's foot or ankle is never normal. Any pain that lasts more than a few days or is severe enough to limit the child's walking should be evaluated by a foot and ankle surgeon. Foot problems commonly seen in children include:

**Pediatric Flatfoot:** Most children with flat feet have no symptoms. However, sometimes they may have trouble participating in physical activities or sports or may appear to walk or run awkwardly. Some complain of pain or cramping in their feet, legs or knees.

**Calcaneal Apophysitis (Sever's Disease):** Calcaneal apophysitis

is an inflammation of the heel's growth plate. It typically affects children between the ages of eight and 14 years old because the heel bone does not fully develop until at least age 14. Until then, new bone forms at the growth plate, a weak area located at the back of the heel. When too much stress is placed on the growth plate, inflammation can develop.

**Ingrown Toenails:** Tight shoes or socks or incorrect nail trimming can cause ingrown toenails in children, although sometimes the tendency for nails to curve inward is inherited. Serious infections can result when the nail breaks the skin. Parents should never try to dig the nail out at home.

**Plantar Warts:** These warts can develop anywhere on the foot, but they typically appear on the bottom of the foot. Plantar warts, which are caused by the human papilloma virus, commonly occur in children and adolescents. These warts grow deep into the skin and can make walking or standing painful.

**If your child experiences any foot or ankle pain that is affecting his or her ability to walk, contact your foot and ankle surgeon immediately to make an appointment.**

## How Smoking Affects Bone Healing



Not only can smoking cause lung cancer and cardiovascular disease, it can affect your healing time after foot or ankle surgery. Studies show smokers take nearly 50 percent longer to heal and often suffer side effects and complications, such as:

- Nonunion or failure of the bone to mend
- Blood clotting
- Wounds that break open
- Greater risk of infection

If you smoke and are facing surgery, it is recommended that you:

- Quit smoking, even if it is just for a few weeks before and after surgery.

- If the surgery is an emergency and you do not have weeks in advance to prepare and quit, then at least quit for the weeks following surgery so you can heal better.
- Educate yourself. Smokers who realize the negative side effects of the habit can often form a healthy, nonsmoking habit and maintain it.

**If you are a smoker and are scheduled to have foot or ankle surgery soon, be sure to speak with your foot and ankle surgeon about how to reduce your risk of complications and improve your healing process.**