

footprints

An informational newsletter for patients of APMA member podiatrists

Fall 2010

Let's Move! With the First Lady



"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake." First Lady Michelle Obama made this moving statement when she launched the "Let's Move" initiative earlier this year. She has been hard at work telling kids and parents about the new program, and we're taking the ride with her. Because healthy feet are such an important part of many aspects of the Let's Move plan, your

podiatrist wants to work with you and your family to help ensure that you can participate and be healthy.

Did you know that over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled? That's probably due to a number of factors. Thirty years ago, kids mostly walked to school, played outside after school, and then sat down to portion-controlled dinners at home with their families. Today, our kids ride to school, have little or no activity at school or at home after school, and eat fewer home-cooked meals. In addition, kids today tend to snack nearly three times more than kids did in the past.

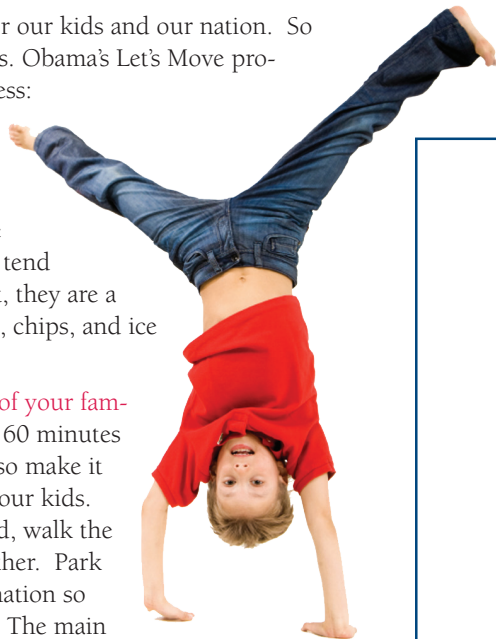
All this adds up to a problem for our kids and our nation. So what can we all do to help? Mrs. Obama's Let's Move program outlines five steps to success:

- **Provide healthy snacks to kids both in their lunches and at home.** Since fruits and veggies are a great source of vitamins and minerals and tend to be lower in calories and fat, they are a great replacement for cookies, chips, and ice cream.
- **Make physical activity a part of your family's routine.** Kids need about 60 minutes of physical activity each day, so make it a point to do activities with your kids. Take a walk to the playground, walk the dog, or do active chores together. Park farther away from your destination so that a short walk is required. The main point is to get away from the couch, the TV, and the computer. A visit to the podiatrist this fall will help you get started on a plan for the entire family.

- **Plan a healthy menu.** Making sure that the whole family eats nutritious meals in reasonable portions can be an experience shared by the family. Get kids involved in planning meals and even in shopping for groceries. Cut back on sugar and high-calorie drinks, and try to eat together as a family. All of these tactics create an atmosphere for better health.
- **Reduce screen time and get active.** Experts indicate that more than an hour or two each day of TV or computer time is too much. Parents need to set rules that limit the amount of time kids watch TV and play video games and encourage more activity. Setting a good example is a great way to begin. Parents also need to provide alternatives to kids, and encourage them to play outside, find new hobbies, or learn a new sport.
 - **Organize a school health team.** Many schools have developed wellness policies that address school food service and physical activity. You can get involved in your community's program by contacting your school principal or PTA for more information.

Your podiatrist can be integrally involved in helping your family get started on the "right foot" by making sure that everyone has healthy feet. A regular visit either before school starts or just after will give you an opportunity to discuss the best sports, shoes, and lifestyle changes for you and your kids. Let's Move today.

For more information about Mrs. Obama's Let's Move program, visit www.letsmove.gov.



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Healthy Shoe Shopping

As parents and children begin the annual hunt for deals on back-to-school items, shopping for healthy shoes should top the “must-buy” list for more important reasons than just a fashionable new look. According to the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA), well-fitting shoes not only reduce the incidence of foot and ankle injuries in kids, but also encourage physical activity, helping to decrease the likelihood of childhood obesity.

Your podiatrist will tell you that if your child’s feet hurt, he or she will be far less likely to participate in outdoor sports and other activities that keep him or her moving and physically fit. With childhood obesity considered an epidemic today, it is vital that parents take just a few moments during this busy back-to-school shopping season to select a shoe that provides adequate support and fits properly. It is one of the easiest ways to keep your child pain-free and healthy.

Shopping for healthy shoes, however, can be a daunting task without knowing what to look for—but the following APMA tips can make your back-to-school shoe purchases easy, smart, and safe:

- **Before buying a shoe, perform the “1,2,3 Test.”** First, squeeze the back of a shoe’s heel and ensure that it does not collapse. Second, grab the front (toe box) of the shoe and make sure that the shoe bends where the child’s toes would naturally bend in the shoe. Third, grab the shoe at both ends and try to gently twist. Shoes should never twist in the middle and should be rigid. If a shoe fails any of these three steps, don’t buy it.

- **Look for the APMA’s Seal of Acceptance.** Many products, including select children’s footwear models made by Pediped, Reebok, and Tsukihoski, have been awarded the APMA’s Seal of Acceptance for demonstrating proper foot health. Look for the APMA Seal on product packaging or a manufacturer’s website.
- **Never hand down footwear.** Sharing shoes can spread and encourage the growth of fungus and bacteria such as athlete’s foot, and regardless of shoe size, shoes can fit every child differently.
- **Have a child’s foot professionally measured regularly.** Most shoe stores will be happy to professionally measure a child’s foot, or your podiatrist can measure your child’s foot during a foot health check-up to ensure proper fit. Also, measure for proper length from toes to the tip of shoes to prevent irritation and injury.
- **No “break-in” period required.** Your child’s shoes should be comfortable to wear immediately and should not require a break-in period for comfort.

For more shoe-shopping tips, visit www.apma.org/kids-shoes. For more information on children’s footwear with the APMA Seal, visit www.apma.org/pediatricfootproducts.

ER or DPM? Making a Decision with Trauma

Foot and ankle trauma is all too common in the fall when kids go back to school and participate in fall sports. In addition, many of us ramp up our exercise regimens as temperatures become more moderate. When faced with what to do and where to go for foot and ankle injuries such as a twisted ankle, broken toe, or open laceration, here are some tips:

- Today’s podiatrists have been educated and trained to diagnose and treat injuries of the foot and ankle.
 - Most foot and ankle injuries can be evaluated and treated by the podiatrist in his or her office, saving a trip to the emergency room.
 - Most podiatrists have X-ray equipment in their offices, so they can determine if your foot or ankle is fractured or just sprained.
- If you decide to go to an emergency room, ask to see a podiatrist.

Wait times and insurance co-payments are often less in your podiatrist’s office than in an emergency room. If in doubt, call your podiatrist to determine where you should go if you injure your foot or ankle.

Doctors of podiatric medicine are podiatric physicians and surgeons, also known as podiatrists, qualified by their education, training, and experience to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and related structures of the leg.