

Help Your Children Spring into Action!



Family health and fitness day is celebrated on June 12th. This event is a rally for parents and families to engage in more active lifestyles with their children to prevent the risk of chronic diseases associated with sedentary lifestyles. This day recognizes that “active” families are more likely to be healthy and happy.

The literature is full of articles promoting activities like walking, running, biking, hiking, exercising, playing sports, dancing, gardening, and eating the right foods.

The Novak Djokovic Foundation, founded by Novak who is currently ranked as the World’s #1 by the Association of Tennis Professional (ATP), has some excellent exercise tips for kids who aren’t interested in playing sports. Some of these tips include rock climbing, martial arts, dance, taking family hikes,

swimming, and ice skating. The Djokovic Foundation stresses the importance of establishing regular workout routines and picking activities that your child enjoys. In addition, the Foundation encourages parents to limit the amount of digital screen time for children and to lead by example. Yes, that’s right; substitute screen time for play time!

Novak’s wish is for every child to reach their full potential and the Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois is one hundred percent behind his philosophy. All parents want their child to get the most out of life but it’s difficult to accomplish this if their feet are not in good shape. Our goal is to help parents recognize when their child may have a foot problem. Please pay close attention to your child’s feet and seek medical attention if you recognize a problem. Here are some of the warning signs that you should look for:

Warning Sign 1 – Child hides feet

When your child starts to cover their feet and does not want you to notice them, it may be because they fear doctors. This often happens if they experience foot pain or if the appearance of their feet or nails change. A child may hide their feet if they are embarrassed because of toenail fungus, Athletes feet, ingrown toenails, corns, calluses, or warts.

Warning Sign 2- Child falls or trips frequently

When your child falls or trips more than usual, this may be a sign of a neuromuscular or balance problem. It can also be a sign of an in-toeing problem.

Warning Sign 3- Child not willing to participate in favorite physical activity

When your child is less willing to participate in a favorite physical activity, this may be caused by heel pain, muscle strain, or swelling in the back of the heel where the growth plate is located.

Warning Sign 4- Child lags behind others

When your child lags behind other playmates, it may be caused by muscle fatigue or because their feet are not functioning properly. Flat feet are a common cause. If left unattended, flat feet may hamper your child's mobility and development. It may also lead to surgery and cause problems to their knees and hips.

Warning Sign 5- Child complains of foot or ankle pain

When your child complains of foot or ankle pain, it is never normal. Ingrown toenails and plantar warts are the most common problems for children. Ingrown toenails usually occur because of improper nail cutting and if shoes are too tight or small. Infected ingrown toenails can become a problem if not treated properly. Simple in-office procedures may be performed by a podiatrist to provide immediate relief and promote healing.

Warning Sign 6- Child complains of warts

When your child complains of warts, try over the counter remedies or seek medical assistance. Plantar warts are usually caused by a virus and can develop anywhere on the foot. Over-the-counter medications may be used, but your podiatrist will have other more effective remedies like acid treatment to the affected site. Laser treatment is also available to effectively get rid of warts and treatment allows your child to return to normal activity immediately.

Warning Sign 7- Child has mechanical problems

Seek medical assistance to address mechanical problems like in-toeing, out-toeing and toe walk. These conditions are easy to notice but should be addressed by your podiatrist to avoid future problems that could also have a negative effect on other body parts if left untreated. In many cases, custom orthotics can successfully treat these problems.

Warning Sign 8- Child has athletic foot or ankle injury

Seek medical attention for sprains, shin splints, and fractures. These injuries typically require proper diagnostics and immediate assistance to ensure bones and ligaments heal properly in stable position. Conventional home remedies like rest, icing, elevation, and compression wraps are effective; however, if pain and swelling persists more than a day or two seek medical assistance.



John M. Sigle, DPM, FACFAS

Warning Sign 9- Child has Sever's disease

A more serious problem that can develop in the pre-teen years is Sever's disease. This condition causes pain in the back of the heel due to tension on the growth plate where the Achilles tendon attaches to the heel bone. This problem is generally exercised induced. Be aware if you child has pain while running, jumping, and exercising. Common symptoms include heel pain, swelling, redness and swelling, soreness and tightness, or change in their gait, like limping or walking or their toes. This disease may hinder your child's ability to resume exercise activities. Conventional treatments include shoes with elevated heels, heel pads, stretching, and anti-inflammatory medications. Walking boots are often used in severe cases to immobilize the foot while the bone heals.

Warning Sign 10- Child has plantar fasciitis, Achilles tendonitis, or stress fractures

Other problems that typically occur during childhood are plantar fasciitis (heel pain), Achilles tendonitis, and stress fractures. These conditions are fairly typical among youth who participate in rigorous sports like tennis, soccer, football, basketball, running, or activities like dance and cheerleading. The sooner you seek medical attention, the better it will be for recovery and quick return to sport.

Warning Sign 11- Child has foot deformity or muscle dystrophy

Other medical conditions like cerebral palsy, polio, club foot, multiple sclerosis, epidermolysis bullosa, and muscular dystrophy may lead to foot deformities. There is a broad range of foot abnormalities that may be mild or severe. In most cases, your podiatrist may use conservative measures that have high success rates. Your podiatrist can recommend several shoe brands or special braces for children who have special foot care needs. In some cases, a child may need surgery.

Inspect your child's feet regularly

Sometimes a foot or ankle problem is not easy to detect in a child because they often cannot articulate how they feel, or tell you what is bothering them. As a parent, it is important to inspect your children's feet regularly and observe any of these warning signs.

Keep the kids moving!

Exercise is essential for your child's physical and mental well-being. It's critical to their foot health as well. Being able to walk and exercise is beneficial for the prevention of disease; and healthy feet are required to do these activities.

The Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois is all about pediatric foot care!

The Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois is recognized as the premiere foot and ankle clinic in central Illinois offering the most comprehensive foot care in the region. Advanced board certified foot and ankle surgeons have completed rotations in pediatric foot care. On some occasions, they participated in volunteer surgical missions in foreign countries to do advanced surgery on children with foot deformities.

The Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois has a world-class open extremity MRI and weight bearing CT scanner, as well as digital imaging for instant diagnosis. All imaging units are access friendly and non-claustrophobic.

Providing high quality service is paramount to us. We strive to make your child's experience personal and convenient; it is an honor to care for them. Our primary goal is to provide immediate pain relief and help your child resume their normal activity. Patients can call for appointments or go

on-line at myfootandanklecenter.com. Patients will be seen same day or within twenty-four hours.

Most insurance plans are accepted including all Blue Cross Blue Shield PPO Plans and Blue Choice Plans (except Medicaid). NO REFERRALS ARE NECESSARY. Remember, when it comes to your healthcare you are in the driver's seat. If your primary care provider tries to channel you to another podiatrist or orthopedic physician within their group, you have the liberty to choose us. This also applies to emergency and trauma. Our surgeons have privileges at eight central Illinois locations. We will be there if we get the call to address the trauma and to provide all follow-up care.

The Foot & Ankle Center of Illinois is one of the few independent podiatry clinics available in the region. We have a robust website that contains a resource library, videos and medical content articles. Clinic locations are conveniently located in Springfield, Decatur, Taylorville, Carlinville, Shelbyville, Sullivan, and Monticello.

Visit myfootandanklecenter.com for further information or to schedule an appointment.



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*EXCLUDES MEDICAID



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