



Gentle Foot Care.... For Your Entire Family!

Did You Know....

...**bunions** are not necessarily a foot condition that afflicts older people? Did you know that **bunions can also develop early in children?** Juvenile bunions are not uncommon, and can potentially be a source of significant discomfort to children. An early developing bunion can be present for a wide variety of reasons. Traditionally, a typical bunion develops after many years of walking with a flat foot as the strain of flattening feet eventually force the big toe joint to deform. When a bunion develops early in kids, the process is a little different. It is probably a combination of the position of the developing child in the womb influencing bone growth, parental genetics, and the presence of foot structural problems that lead to this early development. There are also other factors, which include growth abnormalities in the position of either the long bone or the toe bone that influence the position of the bunion. An unstable foot structure, which includes excessively loose flat feet and feet with tight Achilles tendons, contributes to the acceleration of bunion formation. Another condition, metatarsus adductus, can lead to early bunions. This condition is seen when all the long metatarsal bones are angled inward towards the big toe. This condition is fairly frequent (one in every thousand births), and because the big metatarsal bone is angled inward already in this condition, the ingredient for a bunion to form is already there.



The **treatment of bunions in kids is a little different than treatment for adults.** In adults, except when not possible due to health issues, the typical treatment is surgical correction. Because children are still growing bone, surgery to return the bone to its proper position may not lead to a long term correction. Unless a child's bunion is very painful and limiting activity, it is best to conservatively treat a bunion and delay surgery until after the bone starts to mature (near the start of the teen years). This conservative treatment includes wider shoes to avoid pressure on the bunion bump, stretching to keep the Achilles tendon limber, and prescription orthotic inserts to stabilize flat feet. When the time is right for surgery, the same procedures that are used for adults are considered in kids. However, due to the severity of an early developing bunion, more extensive surgery may be needed that requires a slightly longer healing time. ***If your child has a bunion, it may be well worth your time to have him/her evaluated by a foot specialist to determine if future treatment is needed.***

Physicians and Surgeons of the Foot and Ankle

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