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Keep Kids' Feet & Ankles Safe During Fall Sports Season

Foot and ankle injuries among young athletes tend to increase during the fall sports season. Football, soccer and basketball are the sports most likely to lead to sprains, broken bones and other problems.

Follow these six tips to help protect your children from serious foot and ankle injuries this fall:

1. Treat foot and ankle injuries right away. What seems like a sprain is not always a sprain. In addition to cartilage injuries, your child might have injured other bones in the foot without knowing it. Schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon if you suspect your child has a foot or ankle injury. The sooner treatment starts, the sooner long-term instability or arthritis can be prevented and the sooner your child can get back into the game.

2. Have a foot and ankle surgeon check old sprains before the season starts. A foot and ankle surgeon can reveal whether your child's previously injured foot or ankle might be vulnerable to sprains and could possibly benefit from wearing a supportive brace during competition.

3. Buy the right shoe for the sport. Different sports require different shoe gear. Players should not mix baseball cleats with football shoes.

4. Children should start the season with new shoes. Old shoes can wear down and become uneven on the bottom, causing the ankle to tilt because the foot cannot lie flat.

5. Check playing fields for dips, divots and holes. Most sports-related ankle sprains are caused by jumping and running on uneven surfaces. This is why some foot and ankle surgeons recommend that parents walk the field, especially when children compete in nonprofessional settings like public parks, for spots that could catch a player's foot. Alert coaching officials to any irregularities.

6. Encourage stretching and warmup exercises. Calf stretches and light jogging before competition help warm up ligaments and blood vessels, reducing the risk for foot and ankle injuries.

Before the fall sports season begins, contact a foot and ankle surgeon to have your child's feet, ankles or athletic shoes evaluated. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to locate a foot and ankle surgeon near you.



Have You Heard of a Lisfranc Injury?



Few have heard of a Lisfranc injury, but if it is not detected early on, it can result in severe long-term complications to the foot, such as chronic pain, osteoarthritis and foot deformities.

The Lisfranc joint is where the long bones leading up to the toes connect to the bones in the arch. It helps move your foot forward when you walk or run. Injuries to the Lisfranc joint most often result from high-impact force during car accidents, running or contact sports.

Diagnosis can be difficult because the signs, even during examination and imaging, can be subtle. Symptoms of a Lisfranc injury may include swelling of the foot, pain throughout the midfoot upon standing or during examination, inability to bear weight, bruising on the bottom of the foot in the arch area and an abnormal widening of the foot, possibly signaling dislocation.

The good news is Lisfranc injuries can heal successfully when properly diagnosed and treated in a timely manner. **If you have experienced any sort of foot trauma and the above symptoms appear, schedule an appointment with a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible.**

Bunion Surgery FAQs



If you are considering bunion surgery now or after the new year, here are answers to some of the most common questions that patients ask before their surgery:

Is the surgery painful? The level of pain experienced after bunion surgery differs from patient to patient. Most patients will experience discomfort for three to five days. However, if you closely follow the postoperative care instructions, you can help minimize pain and swelling after your bunion surgery.

What type of anesthesia is used? Most bunion surgeries involve local anesthesia with intravenous sedation. This means your foot will be numb, and you will receive medications to relax you during the procedure.

How soon can I walk after surgery? It depends on your bunion and the surgical procedure selected for you. You may be able to walk just a few days after surgery, but if a more involved surgical procedure is required, it could be several weeks or months before you can fully bear weight on your foot.

How soon can I drive after surgery? You may be asked to avoid driving for three to six weeks depending on the procedure selected for you, which foot you use to drive, how fast you heal and other factors.

Can the bunion come back? Yes, some cases have a risk of bunion recurrence. You can help prevent this by following any instructions to wear arch supports or orthotics in your shoe.

If screws or plates are implanted in my foot to correct my bunion, will they set off metal detectors? Not usually. It depends on the device chosen for your procedure as well as how sensitive the metal detectors are.

A foot and ankle surgeon can tell you more about what to expect during bunion surgery. To find a foot and ankle surgeon in your area, visit FootHealthFacts.org.

Help Your Loved Ones Living with Diabetes Thrive



November is National Diabetes Month and an excellent reminder that the entire family should be involved in making sure loved ones living with diabetes stay healthy. Here are some ways you and your family can participate in healthy activities together:

- 1. Plan meals carefully.** Everyone can benefit from the healthful eating guidelines that your family member(s) living with diabetes needs to follow.
- 2. Make fitness a part of your day.** Taking a walk together can help everyone stay in shape and help your family member(s) living with diabetes control blood sugars.

- 3. To warm cold feet on chilly autumn nights, family member(s) living with diabetes should wear socks to bed.**

They should never use a heating pad or hot water bottle to warm their feet because any diabetic nerve damage could make it difficult for them to feel when the pad or bottle gets too hot.

- 4. Help your family member living with diabetes check his or her feet for any cuts, blisters, scratches, redness or swelling that could lead to infection.** Inspect feet daily, and contact a foot and ankle surgeon at the first sign of trouble.

For more tips on how to keep diabetic feet healthy and to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org.

Visit FootHealthFacts.org for more information on keeping your feet & ankles healthy. Plus, you can also use the site's Find a Physician search tool to locate a foot & ankle surgeon near you.

