



Helpful Hints for Buying Shoes

Have you ever wondered why it is important that your child wears supportive footwear? Or, what you should look for when buying shoes?

Here's our answer:

At birth, the twenty-six bones of the foot are made of cartilage, which, along with ligaments and blood vessels, will eventually make up the adult foot. At this time, feet are soft and pliable and susceptible to damage. It will take until the late teens before the foot is fully developed. A baby's foot is not simply a smaller version of an adult's. It is shorter and wider, and tapers toward the heel. As the feet of very young children are soft, it is very important that they be allowed to develop naturally, without being constricted in any way. Footwear should be supportive, not constrictive, to allow appropriate development. It is important for young children to have the opportunity to walk and run barefoot indoors, so that their feet are not constricted during early development. Yet, outdoors it is important for children to have protection for their feet and to have shoes that support the arches and ankle.

Flat footedness is a common problem and it is important to provide support for the arches so that problems do not progress or become permanent. If you are concerned about your child's feet, don't hesitate to talk to your family physician, or a physiotherapist.

Tips When Buying Shoes:

- Always have both feet measured for length and width. Shoes should be fitted to the foot with the greatest length.
- Avoid slip-on shoes. Shoes should be held on the foot with either laces or Velcro(TM) these fasteners provide multiple points at which the shoe can be adjusted, for a better fit.
- Look for shoes without a raised heel.
- Choose a shoe that fits the natural shape of the foot, especially around the toes.
- Toes should not be squished on the top or sides. Consider growing room by allowing room for the width of 2 fingers at the toe of the shoe.
- Shoes should fit comfortably around the heel and not be too loose or too tight. Don't try to 'break shoes in'.
- Especially in very young children, socks and tights which are too small can cause similar problems to shoes which are too small.
- Fashion shoes are fine for special occasions, but it is best to wear a more 'foot friendly' shoe for regular, everyday wear.
- Visit the shoe store toward the end of the day, as feet tend to swell after a day of activity.

It is recommended that when children come to school they wear a good supportive runner/sneaker as they are very active at school and need the foot support.

