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## Don't Start off the School Year with Painful Feet

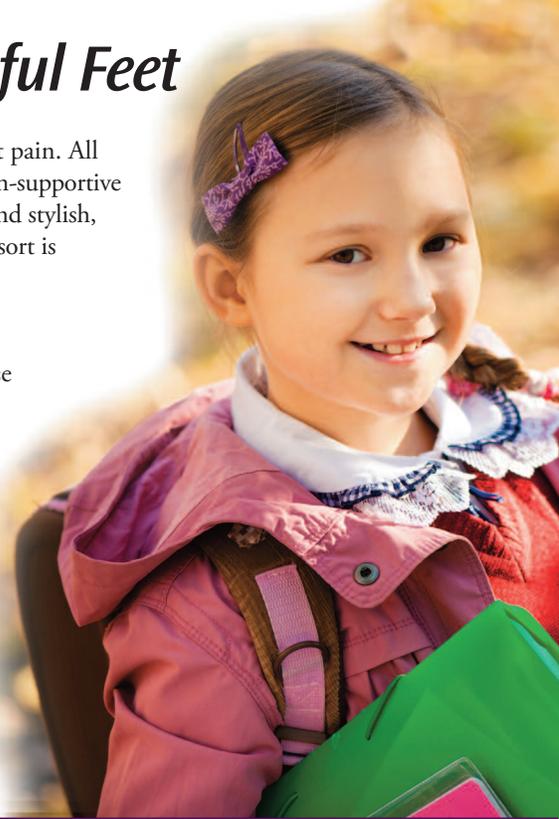
Back to school season will always be painful for some students, but it doesn't need to involve foot pain. All summer, children and teens run around in flip-flops; but when it's time to go back to school, these non-supportive shoes can lead to aches, pains and even increased risk of injury. While these sandals are inexpensive and stylish, they don't cushion or support the foot, and that leads to problems. And remember, foot pain of any sort is not normal and can be reduced or eliminated.

Even into the mid-teenage years, children have a new bone growing in their heels. Flip-flops don't cushion the heel, so repetitive stress from walking can inflame that heel bone growth area and cause pain and tenderness.

Here are some common problems that can be blamed on flip-flops:

- ▶ Heel and Arch Pain
- ▶ Painful Pinched Nerves
- ▶ Broken or Sprained Toes
- ▶ Plantar Warts
- ▶ Callus Build-up on the Heels and Toes
- ▶ Inflammation of the Achilles Tendon
- ▶ Sprained Ankles
- ▶ Cuts and Scrapes
- ▶ Athlete's Foot

If your child is suffering from foot pain this fall, make an appointment with our office. This type of pain can usually be reduced or eliminated with simple treatment methods, including stretching exercises, ice massage, anti-inflammatory medications, and custom or over-the-counter shoe inserts.



## Big Relief is in Sight for a Painful Big Toe

While many people give little thought to their big toes, many others are plagued by a painful condition that limits or eventually totally restricts movement of that all-important toe. Once the big toe starts to hurt, it's obvious just how much we use it to get around, bend over, or even stand.

Pain in the big toe can be caused from a common degenerative disorder known as hallux limitus in its earlier stages and hallux rigidus later on. It can turn everyday motions such as walking, stooping, and climbing stairs into a struggle. The good news is that proper treatment can bring tremendous relief.

### How do you know if you have hallux limitus?

First, it starts out as a painful big toe joint that has stiffness and usually a little loss of motion. As the disorder progresses, arthritis sets in and continually worsens. Bone spurs (overgrowths) can develop, and the toe increasingly loses its range of motion. At the end stage (hallux rigidus), all motion is lost and the toe is rigid. When it gets to that point, walking is severely impaired and pain may be present even at rest. Shoes can be difficult to wear due to bone spurs, and how you walk or gait changes that were made to compensate for the painful toe can lead to other problems such as pain in other areas.

### Treatment Options

Conservative treatment options include wearing custom-made insoles (orthotics) to correct the structural foot abnormalities that are causing the problem, changing footwear, taking oral anti-inflammatory medications, receiving cortisone injections, and attending physical therapy. Surgery is the next step if none of these options relieve the pain. No matter which method we prescribe, the end result is typically the same: a big toe that feels remarkably better.



Early diagnosis and treatment can help alleviate the symptoms of hallux limitus through conservative treatment options.

# Keep Your Feet Safe and Your Yard Clean

Fall is the time to clear out the remains of summer gardens from the yard. Keep your feet and ankles safe from injury by following these helpful tips:

## Helpful Tips

- ▶ **Wear Appropriate Shoes for the Task.** No matter how warm it is, don't wear sandals. Wear sturdy leather shoes with support to protect your feet from sharp objects, including the blades from power equipment.
- ▶ **Speaking of Power Equipment...** Keep Children Away. Protect your kids and others from severe trauma. Leaf blowers, power lawn mowers and chainsaws should not be left out where kids are playing or where other inexperienced users have access.
- ▶ **Don't Work on Wet Surfaces.** You could easily slip and injure an ankle when carrying heavy loads across wet grass or leaves in your yard.

Remember, yard work is a workout! Warm up and perform stretching exercises before starting yard work, just as you would before working out at the gym. By stretching prior to activity, you can help avoid stressing muscles and tendons in the foot, ankle and calves.

