



Patient information

**interpreters,
translations
and other formats**

To ask for an interpreter or signer:

phone: 0117 919 0275

To get this leaflet:

- in large print
- in Braille
- by email or on disk
- on audio cassette

phone 0117 919 0275

For 24 Hours NHS help and advice

NHS Direct on 0845 4647

NHS Direct website

www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Podiatry Department

Your Child's Feet



Toenails

- As with adult nails, a child's nails should always be cut following the shape of the end of the toe.
- Never cut down into the corners as this may encourage ingrowing toenails.
- Any sharp corners should be filed over with an emery board.
- Some children don't like their nails being cut and it is easier to cut them whilst the child is asleep.

Socks

- Socks must also fit well. Avoid synthetic socks as they make the foot sweat as they don't allow the skin to breathe. Cotton or wool are better.
- Synthetic socks are also sold in groups of sizes i.e. 3-6. This often means that they are too big at the bottom end of the scale and too small at the top. To make sure that socks fit correctly measure the sock against your child's foot. It should be as long as your child's foot without being stretched.
- Check the seams. If they are poorly finished and lumpy it will create pressure points on the foot when the socks are worn with shoes.
- Check socks regularly for shrinkage.

When your baby is born the skeleton of their foot is very different to that of an adult's. The bones of the foot are not fully developed in fact it takes about 18 years for the bones to finish developing. The bones that are present are made of cartilage, which is very soft bone. This means that a child's foot is soft and pliable so it can be easily compressed and with continuous pressure damaged. This can occur without causing any discomfort because of the underdeveloped nerves in the foot.

Young feet are vulnerable to any pressure that is put on them. This can be pressure from shoes, socks, and even baby-grows.

Looking after your child's feet

Shoes

- Shoes are not necessary until a child can walk and needs protection from the environment. Once your child is walking make sure that the shoes fit correctly. Problems can occur if shoes are too tight but also if they are too loose. If shoes are loose the toes claw to try and stabilise the foot. This can lead to a permanent deformity of the foot.

Also

- Toes should be able to wiggle quite freely and not be restricted by the shoe.
- Shoes with a fastening e.g. lace, buckle or velcro, will reduce any slopping or clawing of the toes.
- Make sure shoes are fitted correctly. Feet should be measured every time a new pair of shoes is bought as a child's feet will grow rapidly until they reach their late teens.
- Shoe fit should always be checked whilst standing as the foot spreads out when standing.
- Don't hand down shoes as they will have moulded to the child's foot shape and this will almost certainly be different to another child's.
- Don't bother buying a pair of shoes for "best" as by the time your child wears them they will probably have outgrown them.