

Pointers for Parents

Preventing A Common Childhood Foot Problem

(NAPSA)—Parents can prevent one of the most common childhood foot problems by following some simple recommendations.

Foot and ankle surgeons say ingrown toenails are a condition they treat frequently in children. Surgeons say many kids hide their ingrown toenails from their parents, even though the condition can cause significant pain. The problem is that ingrown toenails often break the skin, allowing bacteria to enter and cause an infection.

Tight shoes, tight socks and incorrect toenail trimming cause most pediatric ingrown toenails, according to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS). In other cases, children may inherit the tendency for nails to curve.

FootPhysicians.com provides parents these recommendations:

- Make sure children's shoes fit. Shoe width is more important than length. Make sure that the widest part of the shoe matches the widest part of your child's foot.
- Teach children how to trim their toenails properly. Trim toenails in a fairly straight line. Don't cut them too short.
- Never try to dig out an ingrown toenail or cut it off. These



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dangerous “bathroom surgeries” carry a high risk for infection.

- Have a qualified doctor treat a child's ingrown toenail. A minor surgical procedure can eliminate the pain and often prevent the condition from coming back.

A foot and ankle surgeon may prescribe antibiotics if there's an infection.

One thing parents can do to reduce their child's pain is to soak the affected foot in room-temperature water. Then gently massage the side of the nail fold.

For more information on ingrown toenails in children, visit FootPhysicians.com.