



FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



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Back-to-School Foot Problems: Warning Signs Every Parent Should Know

As we gear up for another school year, most parents are focused on backpacks, supplies, and new clothes. But what if your child's feet are sending subtle distress signals that could impact their entire school experience?



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Over the years I've learned kids rarely complain directly about foot pain. Instead, they adapt their behavior in ways that parents often mistake for laziness, moodiness, or simply "growing up."

What Your Child Isn't Telling You

Jungle Gym Enthusiast Turned Screen Time Junkie

If your once-active child has suddenly become glued to video games or shows, it might not be a phase. Children with developing foot problems instinctively avoid activities that cause discomfort. That child who used to race around the playground but now prefers quiet activities could be protecting painful feet.

The Morning Grump

We often blame school anxiety or not getting enough sleep for morning crankiness. But consider this: plantar fasciitis and heel pain are often worst when kids first get out of bed.

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Our Little Traveler



Lynn Gets Crafty

Tomato Galette

A perfect summer recipe you and your kids will both devour.

For the pastry:

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 8 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 3-4 tablespoons ice water
- ½ cup ricotta cheese
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

For the filling:

- 2-3 large ripe tomatoes (about 1½ pounds), sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 egg, beaten (for brushing)
- 2 tablespoons fresh herbs (basil, thyme, or oregano) for



1. Slice tomatoes and lay on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt and let sit for 30 minutes to draw out excess moisture. Pat dry.
2. For the pastry In a bowl, whisk flour and salt. Cut in cold butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Gradually add ice water until dough comes together. Form into a disk, wrap in plastic, and chill 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400°F.
3. For the filling mix ricotta, Parmesan, basil, olive oil, garlic, and pepper in a small bowl.
4. Roll pastry into a 12-inch circle on parchment paper. Transfer to a baking sheet. Spread ricotta mixture in center, leaving a 2-inch border. Arrange tomato slices in overlapping circles on top. Fold pastry edges up and over filling, pleating as needed. Brush pastry with beaten egg. Bake 35-40 minutes until crust is golden brown and tomatoes are slightly caramelized. Cool for 10 minutes. Garnish with fresh herbs before serving.

If your child seems particularly irritable those first few steps of the day, their feet might be the real culprit.

The Shoe Obsession (Or Aversion)

Some kids become oddly particular about their shoes—insisting on wearing only one pair or fighting you about putting shoes on at all. This behavior often signals that most shoes cause discomfort, and they've found the one pair that doesn't hurt.

The Sports Avoider

A child who was keeping up with teammates but suddenly seems slower or less enthusiastic about sports may be dealing with foot pain. Kids rarely want to admit they're hurting, especially in competitive environments.

The Three-Point Prevention System

Instead of waiting for problems to develop, I recommend what I call the "Three-Point Prevention System" for active families:

Point 1: The Monthly Foot Check

Make it a family ritual—perhaps the first Saturday of each month.



Look for:

- Any bumps, spots, or growths (potential plantar warts)
- Signs of ingrown nails
- Unusual wear patterns on their shoes

I've written a book for kids called "How to Keep Your Feet Happy". It's a great conversation starter about potential foot problems and how to prevent them.
Ages 3-6

Click on photo to download.

How to Keep Your Feet Happy!



Point 2: The Activity Assessment

Ask yourself: Has my child's activity level changed in the past few weeks? Sometimes the first sign of a developing problem is subtle behavioral changes rather than complaints of pain.

Point 3: Shoe Assessment Time

Kids feet grow fast. Once kids are more consistently wearing shoes outside, it's essential to get their feet measured with each shoe purchase. Shoes should fit securely on their feet with shoe laces or Velcro. You can also test the shoes before you buy them. [Check on my video here!](#) Avoid slip-on shoes like flip flops. They won't provide the support they need when playing outside.

Does My Kid Need A Foot Health Check-Up?

This August consider scheduling a "foot health check-up" for your student-athlete. This is particularly important if your child is 5 or 6 and still has not developed an arch.

Our GO4D gait analysis can identify potential problems before they sideline your child from the activities they love.

Remember: healthy feet equal a healthy, active school year.

Help the Lake City Food Bank Restock Their Pantry

The North Helpline, our local Lake City food bank, is running low on essential items, and we want to help restock their shelves for neighbors in need.

We'll be collecting non-perishable food donations at our office from **August 1–31**. Here are a few items that are especially helpful:

- Pop-top cans of soup or other ready-to-eat items (no can opener needed!)
- Easy, no-cook meals like mac & cheese or ramen
- Breakfast basics like cereal
- Canned fruit, peanut butter, and other shelf-stable staples
- Fresh vegetables from your garden
- Anything else you'd want to find in your own pantry

Want an easy way to give? **Shop directly from their Amazon Wishlist** and have items shipped straight to them:

□ <https://a.co/aEHc5uu>

You can also make a big impact by **becoming a monthly donor**—this helps North Helpline plan ahead and support families all year long.

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—Dr. Rion Berg

To make an appointment, call us at 206-368-7000.

