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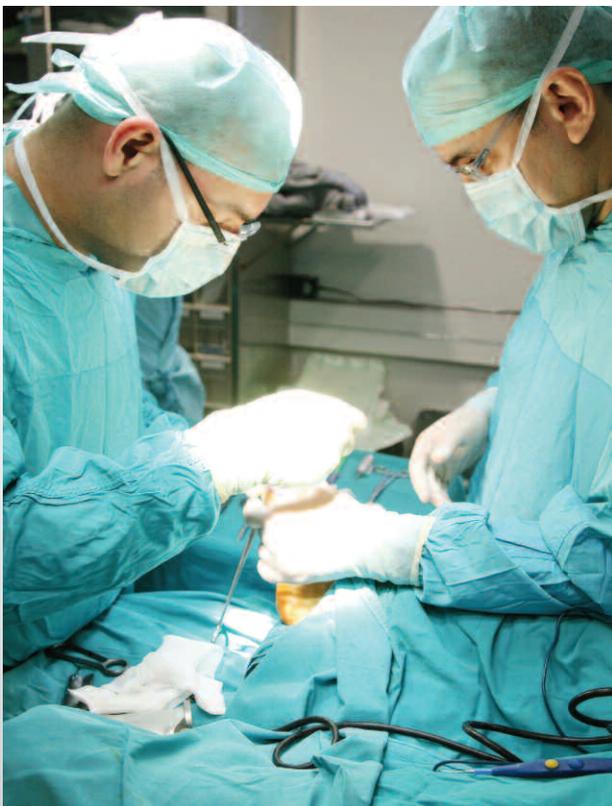
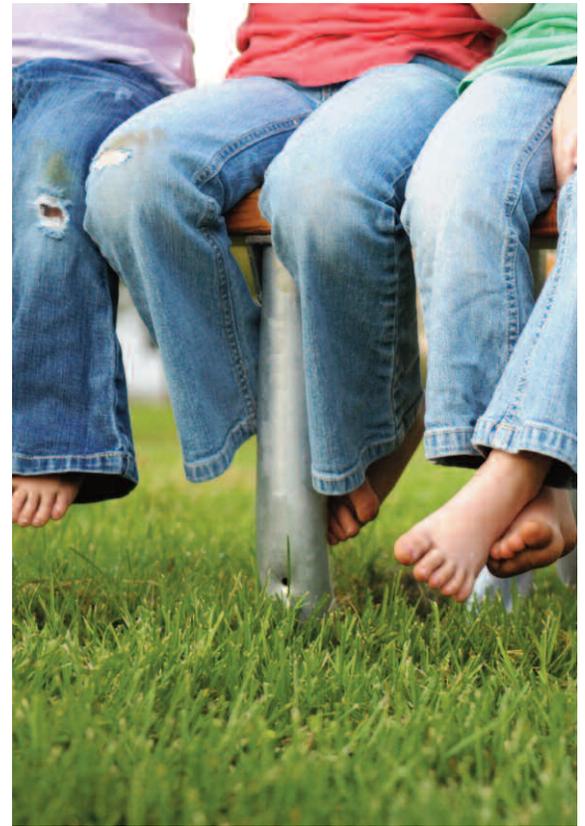
Pediatric Flatfoot - Cause for Alarm?

Parents keep a watchful eye on their children as they grow and develop, making note of any sign of a potential problem. One issue that we as foot and ankle surgeons like to address early on is pediatric flatfoot, a condition that, if left untreated, can result in permanent deformity in adulthood. Flatfoot deformity can make mobility and exercise painful, increasing the risk of reduced cardiovascular health and obesity. Fortunately, there are easy-to-spot signs that your child may have flatfoot.

Here's what to look for:

- ▶ Pain, tenderness or cramping in the foot, leg and knee
- ▶ Outward tilting of the heel
- ▶ Awkwardness or clumsiness in walking
- ▶ Difficulty with shoes
- ▶ Inability to keep up with playmates
- ▶ Tiring easily from play
- ▶ Voluntary withdrawal from physical activities

If your child is experiencing any of these issues or you have other concerns with your child's feet, make an appointment with our office for a thorough exam. Pediatric flatfoot can usually be treated with stretching exercises, a soft brace, physical therapy, shoe modifications, anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen to reduce pain and inflammation, or an orthotic device that fits inside the shoe and supports the structure of the foot. In some cases, surgery is the best alternative.



Smoking and Bone Healing – 5 Surgical Risks Smokers Take

We all know the obvious dangers of smoking: lung cancer and cardiovascular health issues. But, what many don't know is that it can also cause serious complications and affect patients' healing time after surgery. New studies focused on the effects smoking has on bone healing after surgery reveal that smokers take nearly 50 percent longer to heal and often suffer side-effects such as:

- ▶ Non-union, or failure of the bone to mend
- ▶ Longer healing time
- ▶ Blood clotting
- ▶ Wounds that break open
- ▶ Greater risk of infection

If you do smoke and are facing surgery, our office recommends:

- ▶ Quit smoking, even if it's just for a few weeks before and after surgery.
- ▶ If the surgery is an emergency and you don't have weeks in advance to prepare and quit, then at least quit for the weeks following surgery so you can heal better.
- ▶ Educate yourself. Oftentimes, smokers who realize the negative side-effects of the habit can form a non-smoking habit and maintain it.

If you are a smoker and have an upcoming foot or ankle surgery with our surgeons, be sure to speak with them regarding your surgery and how to help reduce your risk of complications.

How to Prevent Deep Vein Thrombosis: Tips for Travelers

For many, spring and summer mean it's time for a vacation. Long car or plane rides, however, can trigger a serious condition known as Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). DVT is a condition in which a blood clot (a blockage) forms in veins located deep within the leg or other parts of the body. If the clot breaks loose and travels through the bloodstream, it can lodge itself in the lung, causing a pulmonary embolism that can make it difficult to breathe and may even cause death. Some people are more at risk than others for developing DVT. Risk factors include varicose veins, blood clotting disorders, pregnancy or recent childbirth, obesity, tobacco use, and heart disease. People over 40 years old, those who have had recent surgery, or those who are immobile through inactivity or wearing a cast are also more at risk for DVT.

People with DVT in the leg may have little to no symptoms. **Contact our office immediately if you have any of these warning signs: swelling in the leg, pain in the calf or thigh, or warmth and redness of the leg. You may need to be evaluated right away in our office.**

If you are at risk for DVT and plan on taking a long trip this season, follow these tips to reduce the likelihood of developing a blood clot:

- *Exercise legs every two to three hours to get the blood flowing back to the heart. Walk up and down the aisle of a plane or train, rotate ankles while sitting, and take regular breaks on road trips.*
- *Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids; avoid caffeine and alcohol.*
- *Consider wearing compression stockings.*

