

# Your Next Step, P.C.

## FOOT NOTES

### SPECIAL EVENTS!

- ◆ Ulcers
- ◆ Back to School Shoe Buying Basics



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Ulcers are skin wounds that are slow to heal and are classified in four stages, according to which layers or skin are broken through.

#### Those stages and their characteristics are:

**Stage 1**- characterized by a reddening over bony areas. The redness on the skin does not go away when pressure is relieved.

**Stage 2**- characterized by blisters, peeling or cracked skin. There is a partial thickness skin loss involving the top two layers of the skin.

**Stage 3**- characterized by broken skin and sometimes bloody drainage. There is a full thickness skin loss involving subcutaneous tissue (the tissue between the skin and the muscle)

**Stage 4**- characterized by breaks in the skin involving skin, muscle, tendon and bone and are often associated with a bone infection called osteomyelitis.

#### People get foot ulcers for four major reasons:

- **Neuropathic** – Loss of sensation in the feet
- **Arterial** - Due to poor blood flow to the lower extremity. This type of ulcer can be very painful and is usually found on the tips of toes, lower legs, ankle, heel and top of the foot. It can very easily become infected.
- **Venous** - This type of ulcer is due to compromised veins. It is commonly seen around the inside of the ankle and are slow to heal.
- **Decubitus** - This type of ulcer is caused by excessive prolonged pressure on one area of the foot. The most common place to see this type of ulcer is in a person confined to bed and they occur on the backs of the heels.

Foot ulcers are typically found in diabetics.

As prominent metatarsal heads on the plantar or bottom of the foot are subjected to increased pressure, the skin begins to become callused. The callused skin can be subjected to shear forces that cause a separation between the layers of the skin, which fill with fluid and become contaminated and infected. The result is a foot ulcer.

“Contact casts” are sometimes applied to the diabetic foot to relieve the bony prominent areas of pressure, allowing ulcers are to heal.

### Back to School Shoe Buying Basics

It's that time of year again. The ringing of the class bell means students across the nation are heading back to school, trading in their sun block and swimsuits for books and back packs. It is also time for parents to help their children select the all important back-to-school shoes.

Our doctors here at Your Next Step recommend that parents use a discerning eye, and remember that comfort should always come first when helping their child sift through the new and exciting footwear styles of the season. Keep these tips in mind when shopping for new shoes:

- Buy shoes in the afternoon. Feet tend to expand throughout the day.
- Examine the shoe itself. It should have a firm heel counter (stiff material on either side of the heel), adequate cushioning of the insole, and a built-in arch. It should be flexible enough to bend where the foot bends- at the ball of the foot, not in the middle of the shoe.
- The child's foot should be sized while he or she is standing up and fully weight-bearing.
- Always have both feet measured for length, and if they are two different sizes, shoes should be chosen that fit the larger foot best.
- Ask if the shoe salesperson is a trained shoe fitter.
- A newly fitted shoe should be approximately ½ inch longer than the longest toe. The child should be able to comfortably wiggle his or her toes in the shoe.
- Have the child walk around the store for more than just a few minutes wearing the shoe with the type of sock that they will be wearing with the shoe. Ask the child if he or she feels any pressure spots in the shoe. Feel the inside of the shoe for any staples or irregularities in the glue that could cause irritation. Examine where the inside stitching hits the foot. Look for signs of irritation on the foot after the shoe is worn.
- Avoid slip-on shoes. Shoes should be held on the foot with laces, straps or Velcro fastenings.
- Heel height should be no more than 1.5 inches, and lower for younger children.
- The heel should have a broad base and be made from a shock-absorbing material.
- Natural material uppers are best i.e. leather
- The toe area of the shoe should be toe-shaped, and also deep enough to allow the toes to move freely and not be squashed.
- Pick shoes that do not need a “break-in” period. The shoes you purchase should be comfortable right away. If shoes are too tight, they can cause blisters, calluses or corns. This is critical for children with diabetes.
- If your child wears prescription orthotics-biomechanical inserts prescribed by our doctors, you should take them along to the shoe fitting.

### ***On-Line Shopping at Your Next Step***

To find and purchase your item(s) on our online store:

1. Visit [www.yournextstep.net](http://www.yournextstep.net)
2. Click on the “Foot Care Store” link.
3. Search for your product by “Manufacturer” or your “Condition.”
4. Once you find your product, add it to your “Shopping Cart.”
5. Follow the instructions on our site to pay by credit card (Our online store is a “secure site”, which you can trust with credit card information).
6. Expect to receive your order by mail in 3-5 business days.