

## **Frequently Asked Questions Pregnancy and Pediatric Foot Health**

### **1. How does pregnancy impact the feet?**

Pregnancy can impact the feet numerous ways from over-pronation and plantar fasciitis due to increased body weight to an increase in foot size related to hormonal changes. Leg (arch/ heel pain) cramps can occur because of poor circulation and lower extremity swelling.

### **2. Is it normal for my baby's feet to look discolored, wrinkled or for his/her skin to peel when he/she is born?**

Babies spend anywhere from nine to 10 months in a shelter of protective fluid. The feet need just as much time to fill out and turn a normal color as the rest of the body. Once you give birth, your OB and then later your pediatrician will look for obvious abnormalities of your baby's feet and legs.

### **3. Are there certain things I can do to care for my baby's feet?**

Caring for your baby's feet is no different than the care you provide to the rest of his/her body. Trim your child's toenails with baby nail clippers, making sure to cut straight across to prevent ingrown toenails. Also, be sure to thoroughly dry your baby's feet after a bath. Additionally, purchase items, such as an activity gym, which will allow your baby to move his/her legs and feet around. This will help him/her strengthen his/her muscles in preparation to walk. Try **SmartKnit Kids Seamless Sensitivity Socks\*** – these soft, anti-microbial socks don't wrinkle or bunch and are proven to reduce irritation in your tot's tootsies.

### **4. At what age should my child take his/her first step?**

When physically and emotionally ready, your child will walk. Comparisons with other children are misleading, since the age for independent walking ranges from 10 to 18 months.

### **5. When should I put my baby in his/her first pair of shoes?**

When your child first begins to walk. Shoes are not necessary indoors. Allowing your youngster to go barefoot or to wear only socks helps the foot to grow normally and to develop its musculature and strength, as well as the grasping action of toes. Of course, when walking outside or on rough surfaces, babies' feet should be protected in lightweight, flexible footwear made of natural materials. Try **Pediped's\*** – designed for infants and toddlers up to two years old, these soft, hand-stitched shoes provide a safe environment for tiny toes while allowing plenty of room for foot growth and muscle development.

### **6. When should I take my child to see a podiatrist?**

The APMA recommends having your child examined by an APMA member podiatrist once he/she begins to walk to make sure his/her feet are progressing normally, especially if there is a family history of foot problems. Many APMA member podiatrists specialize in pediatrics. You can search for a podiatrist in your area by visiting APMA's Web site, [www.apma.org](http://www.apma.org), and clicking on "Find a Podiatric Physician." You will find a list of podiatrists who you can call to see if they specialize in pediatrics.

### **7. When is a child's foot fully developed, and why is this important?**

Full skeletal maturity takes place in most individuals between the ages of 18 to 23 years of age. Foot maturity continues while many children are active on his/her feet. It is important to have your child's feet checked regularly by an APMA member podiatrist.

### **8. What steps should be taken to make sure a child's feet are not at risk when participating in sports?**

When your child participates in sports, make sure they wear sport-specific shoes that fit properly. They should also warm up and cool down before and after participating in a sport.

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