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**Department of
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital

5/F, Li Shu Pui Block
2 Village Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2835 7156
Fax: (852) 2892 7568

Email: podiatry@hksh-hospital.com
Service Hours (By appointment only)
Monday to Friday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays

HKSH Eastern Medical Centre

5/F, Li Shu Fong Building
5 A Kung Ngam Village Road
Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2917 1180
Fax: (852) 2892 7403

Email: podiatry@hksh-emc.com
Service Hours (By appointment only)
Monday to Friday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm
Saturday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
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For enquiries and appointments,
please contact us



**Children's
Foot Health**

Children's Foot Health

It is important that your child's feet reach certain milestones at certain times to ensure they are developing properly.

Many deformities that develop later in life can often be traced back to early abnormal foot growth and development in children. However, some of the foot conditions are transitional which will eventually self-correct with growth.

With early assessment it is often possible to prevent certain types of foot problems from developing and to distinguish between the normal variant and the pathological foot conditions of your child. By knowing the development of your child's feet, you may avoid unnecessary treatment or excessive treatments.

Children's foot health assessment involves the examination of the foot structure and posture. Children's foot function and its relationship with other parts of the body during standing or walking will also be checked.

Your child's feet are growing fast and are delicate. Advices are often provided to families on the choice of appropriate footwear for your child's foot movement to achieve better balance between the support and control of foot motion. Many foot problems in children are caused by inappropriate footwear. So make sure you check your child's footwear regularly in terms of its size and shape (refer to Table 1).

Nowadays many shops may emphasise the effect of "corrective or healthy shoe" or "corrective insole" for children. Before purchasing any "therapeutic insert or footwear" for your child from shops, you may consult your podiatrist for assessment and professional advice.

After assessment, if your child's feet, posture or gait (walk pattern) is beyond the normal variation, podiatrist may sometimes need to refer he/she for multidisciplinary management. But most of the time, podiatrist may prescribe the most suitable footwear or orthosis for your child's condition to assist their gait and growth, and to improve the bone alignment, muscle coordination and joint position sense. Podiatrist also provides information on some specific exercise to improve muscle strength and joint mobility.

Common children's foot problems include:

Foot Structure and Function

- Bunion / Hallux valgus
- Flat feet / pronated feet
- In-toeing
- Out-toeing
- Claw toes / Hammer toes
- Easy fatigue
- Clumsiness in walking

Skin

- Corns and callus
- Foot fungal skin infection
- Warts / Verrucae of the feet

Toenail

- Ingrown toenail
- Fungal infection of toenail (Onychomycosis)

Foot Pain and Sport

- Aching feet and related lower limb pain
- Foot problems related to sport and exercise

Disease-related Foot Problems

- Cerebral palsy or other foot problems related to neurological conditions

Table 1: General tips on choosing a right pair of shoes for your children

Age	Tips
0 - 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soft material• Preferably genuine leather or microfiber• Breathable materials• Can be twisted or bended without much effort
2 - 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gradually stiffer heel counter to support the foot• Check whether the bending site for the toes is in an appropriate area
6 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be bended at the toes bending area• Check whether the bending site for the toes is in an appropriate area• Mild increase in stiffness at the heel counter and the sole of footwear• Cannot be easily distorted under mild force but still maintains reasonable softness

You should seek professional advice if your child has the following problems:

- Abnormal skin lesions on the foot
- Difficulty in nail cutting which sometimes may induce pain or redness at the side of the toenail
- Abnormal standing or walking posture of the lower limb
- Foot pain
- Not willing to walk or complains of tiredness of the lower limb even within a short walking distance
- Excessive wearing of the shoe at the sole or the wear mark of the shoe is asymmetric or abnormal
- Abnormal footwear deformity after a short period of time