

Winter Sport Foot Care Tips

(NAPSA)—With the excitement of the Olympics still in the air, the American Podiatric Medical Association provides an overview of how cold-weather sports can affect two of an athlete's most important assets—his or her feet.

From the downhill rush of snow skiing or bobsledding to rough-and-tumble ice hockey and the graceful skating, the winter sports can be a perpetual challenge when it comes to proper foot care. Any problems with the foot or ankle could have serious repercussions for winter sports participants.

Proper footwear, insulated, waterproof boots or shoes, and socks are essential to protecting feet from the ill effects of winter weather. Podiatric physicians recommend a single pair of thick socks made of acrylic fibers that wick away moisture caused by perspiration in the boot. Feet soaked in snow should get back indoors quickly to avoid the danger of frostbite.

For skiers, the high speeds and force of gravity can have a tremendous impact on the feet, especially during steep, bumpy runs. Skating also puts extra



stress on the ankle. Hockey players change direction at speeds near 30 miles per hour and even figure skating requires quick turns and stops by the feet and ankles.

Before taking to the ice or slopes in cold weather it's important to loosen up the muscles by stretching. Stretching helps prevent muscle pulls and tears, and prepares the muscles for the flexing required by the constant forward-lean stress of skiing and skating.

For more information on foot care, visit www.apma.org or call 1-800-FOOTCARE (366-8227) for a free brochure.