

Fact Sheet

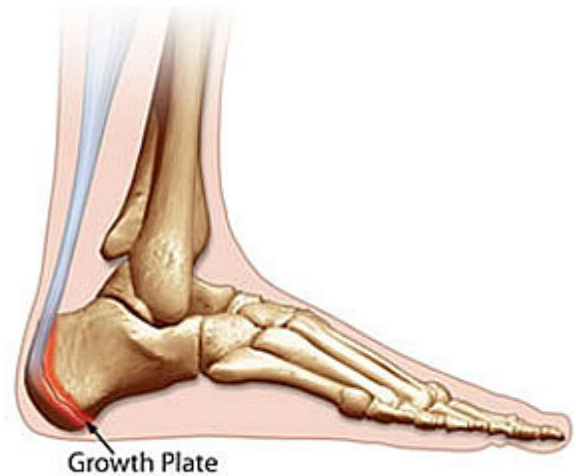
Sever's Disease

What is Sever's Disease?

Sever's Disease is a heel pain condition, where there is pain at the achilles tendon attachment.

As children become more active in sport during the growing years, children may complain of pain in one or both heels shortly after running, engaging in sports or even walking.

The pain is centered at the back of, or under the heel. The cause of heel pain in children is usually reported in 8 to 14 year olds.



Causes

Heel pain is very common in children because of the very nature of their growing feet and legs. In children, the heel bone (the calcaneus) is not fully developed until the age of 14 or older. Until then, new bone is forming at the growth plate of the foot (the apophysis, located at the back of the heel), an area which is softer than others due to its role in accommodating the growth.

Repetitive stress on the growth plate due to walking, running and sports causes inflammation in the heel area. Because the heel's growth plate is sensitive, repeated running and pounding on hard surfaces can result in pediatric heel pain. High impact sports such as football, soccer, running or basketball are especially vulnerable.

Over-pronation (fallen arches and rolling inwards of the feet) will also increase the stress on the growth plate and is therefore a significant cause and a major contributing factor to heel pain in children.



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Treatment

Assessment of a child's mechanical foot functions, foot posture and shoe wear patterns can assist in diagnosing and treating the condition. Treatments may include:

- **Rest and reduction of the activity** - this can be a difficult option, as children are normally quite adamant in pursuit of their favorite pastimes.
- **Over the counter anti-inflammatory drugs** - such as ibuprofen (found in Nurofen), to help reduce pain and inflammation.
- **Stretching exercises before play** - this will often help reduce the stress on the fascia and relieve heel pain in your child.
- **Footwear** - ensuring your child's footwear is a best fit and provides appropriate support is important to the foot and leg mechanics.
- **Orthotic insoles** - orthotics made for children will help support the foot properly, and help prevent over-pronation or improper gait by supporting your child's foot into a proper biomechanical position.



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