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In this issue: Kids and Heel Pain, Free Book, Blog Post Updates and more.

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## Do children get heel pain?

**Absolutely:** Kids get heel pain, but not usually the same reason that adults do. When an adult gets heel pain it is usually related to inflammation or degeneration of the ligament on the bottom of the foot called the plantar fascia. When kids get heel pain it is usually related to the growth plate in the heel bone. This condition is called **calcaneal apophysitis (Sever's Disease)**.

This can be a real miserable experience for children—especially young and athletic ones. Most of the time, kids that get this problem participate in sports or some other activity that requires them to be on their feet with high impact type of activities. Also, wearing cleats can be a big problem. Cleats have a hard plate on the bottom of the shoe and they also have a cleat usually right underneath the heel that puts a lot of pressure on the posterior (bottom) aspect of the heel when running. The reason this is such a tough problem for children is because it is during those developmental years when a great deal of athletic skills are learned. If the patient is hampered by pain, the skills sometimes are never learned and the patient never catches up with his or her peers. Another group of children that has this condition are children that are overweight. For them, this condition can be particularly problematic because it causes them to decrease activity and thereby places them at greater risk for further weight gain.

**How bad can this condition get?** This condition can get pretty serious and cause the patient to discontinue sports or other activities for awhile. Usually, however, it is just a problem of pain when participating in activities.

**What are some of the things that can be done to prevent the problem?** Using a good arch support with a cushioned insole can be a big help in decreasing the incidence of heel pain in children. Also, avoiding certain activities that cause the heel pain is important. Running barefoot on concrete is a great way to make the heel pain a lot worse. Well-cushioned running shoes with a good arch support can prevent a lot of this problem.

**What can be done to treat this problem?** Ice, rest, using nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications at a pediatric dose and wearing a good arch support are all very effective methods for treatment. Sometimes more aggressive treatments like casting are needed. There are some nutritional supplements that can also be very helpful for patients who have this problem. There are other more advanced treatments that are available but before starting these, the correct diagnosis needs to be made.

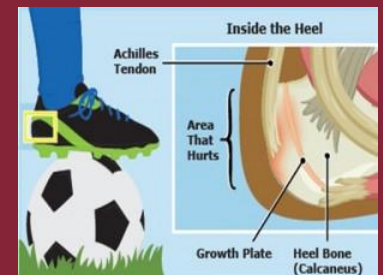
Rarely, the patient has to discontinue sports for an extended period of time in order to get over the pain of this condition. Sometimes prolonged casting is needed.

**What is the prognosis?** This condition usually self resolves when the patient reaches skeletal maturity. The patient still may have some residual heel pain but generally it's much improved once the patient reaches 15-16 years old. It is usually not a problem in the long-term.

Call us today if your child has heel pain. Heel pain is common but never normal.

### Sever's Disease

It typically affects children between the ages of 8 and 14 years old, because the heel bone (calcaneus) is not fully developed until at least age 14. Until then, new bone is forming at the growth plate (Physis), a weak area located at the back of the heel. When there is too much repetitive stress on the growth plate, inflammation can develop.



#### Symptoms:

- Heel Pain
- Limping
- Walking on toes
- Difficulty with sports
- Tiredness
- Pain when sides of heels are squeezed

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Your Next Step  
For Healthy Feet

*Where will Your Feet take You?*



A truly rich man is one whose children run into his arms  
when his hands are empty. ~Author Unknown



My next pair of shoes for  
the Texas Jump Jam



**My Child  
Has Flat  
Feet**

Children's Orthotics

Flat feet can often be a hereditary problem that causes  
lifelong pain. At Next Step Foot & Ankle Clinic we can help  
children and teens with their flat feet.



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ON MY KIDS' FEET**

Children often experience problems with  
plantar warts, which can cause intense pain  
when they spring up on the ball of the foot or  
heel. With simple procedures, your child can  
overcome painful warts.