

HEEL PAIN IN GROWING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS



WHAT IS IT?

To allow for growth during childhood and adolescence our bones have areas called “growth plates”. Once we are fully developed these growth plates close. During periods of growth these growth plates are weaker than the surrounding tendons and muscles.

A growth plate is present at the back of children’s calcaneus (heel bone) and is the area where our achilles tendon attaches. Repetitive stress and traction of our achilles on our heel bone causes inflammation and irritation at this area. This is sometimes referred to as “Sever’s Disease”.

IS IT NORMAL?

Heel pain is very common in growing children and adolescents. Those that are very physically active are more susceptible to this type of heel pain.



WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

1. **DOING LESS IS MORE:** physical activity is not harmful however, decreasing the amount of physical activity will allow symptoms to settle quicker. During periods of severe heel pain a decrease in activities and sports involving running and jumping will be beneficial.

2. **CALF RAISE HOLDS:** completing this exercise is a primary component of managing this type of heel pain. Calf raise holds can have a pain relieving effect. Videos of how to complete this exercise can be seen by clicking on the links under the photo below.



3. **WEAR SHOES:** avoid spending time barefoot and wear supportive shoes instead. Heel wedges that give a lift to the heel in shoes can also be of assistance.

4. **DO NOT STATIC STRETCH:** stretching your calf muscles can increase the compression on an already inflamed area and is not recommended for managing this type of heel pain.

5. **CALF MASSAGE/TAPING:** short term symptomatic relief can be provided via soft tissue work through calf muscles and taping.

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Kate has a particular interest in sports injuries and physiotherapy and loves keeping people active and doing what they enjoy most!



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