



Suffolk Podiatry

Children and Flat Feet

What are flat feet?

This is when the foot is flat in appearance and there appears to be little or no visible arch along the inside edge of the foot when the child is standing. Developmentally before the age of 3 all children have flat feet as the arch of the foot does not begin to fully develop until after this age.

What causes flat feet?

Most cases of flat feet are genetically inherited from parents and are not associated with a medical condition and often experience no symptoms.

In rarer cases it can be associated with other conditions such as:

- Where the bones of the foot do not form correctly during pregnancy
- Loose connective tissue syndromes such as hypermobility or Ehlers Danlos syndrome
- Conditions affecting the muscles and nerves, such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida or muscular dystrophy
- The connective tissue in the foot becoming stretched and inflamed, due to injury, overuse, or unsupportive footwear



What treatment might my child need?

Most cases of flat feet are painless and do not require treatment. If there are associated symptoms with flat feet, such as pain, the podiatrist may recommend one or more of the of the following:

- Changing / wearing more supportive footwear
- Exercises to stretch and strengthen muscles of the lower limb



- Wearing insoles (Orthotics) to help to support the feet These treatments will not alter the shape of the feet but should help to reduce and relieve symptoms.

Will anything make it worse?

Your child should be encouraged to continue with all normal activities including sports they participate in unless advised to alter or reduce by the podiatrist

Footwear

Good fastening, well-fitting footwear is essential for the growing foot Flexible footwear is most appropriate in most cases

- Lace ups offer greater support but all shoes should have a good fastening.
- Ensure there is good cushioning on the sole of the shoe
- Well-fitting trainers are as good as shoes, provided they offer flexibility in the sole A separate Footwear advice leaflet is available from the podiatry page of our website :

<https://suffolkfed.org.uk/healthcare-services/podiatry/>

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