



Suffolk Podiatry

Children's Podiatry : Sever's

What is Sever's?

Often referred to as "Sever's Disease" this condition isn't really a disease, but more accurately an apophysitis (Inflammation of the "apophysis", or "growth plate"). Sever's is a term used to describe inflammation of the calcaneal apophysis which occurs in children and adolescents. It presents in pain at the back of one or both heels.

What causes Sever's?

Heel pain associated with Sever's is a result of a rapid growth spurt in which the achilles tendon is being pulled at the point it inserts into the heel bone. The calf muscle is at the back of the leg and it feels tight as a result of the bone growing much faster than the muscle. The condition is more common in young people especially those active in sport, and boys are more frequently affected than girls.



Advice

R.I.C.E—rest, ice, compression, elevation

- **Rest** is the most important element of treatment. Only do as much exercise as it will allow without causing pain. Avoid activities which will make it worse such as running and jumping. Swimming can be a good alternative
- **Ice** should be applied at least three times a day for 10 to 15 minutes to the affected area. If it is particularly painful then ice can be applied for 10 minutes every hour. Ice massage with an ice cube is also a convenient way to apply cold therapy to a specific area. Keep the ice moving as applying directly to the skin can cause ice burns.
- **Compression** - Some patients find it helpful to wear an elastic wrap or compression support, these are available from many pharmacists or online.
- **Elevate** the leg when painful especially after sport

Pain and anti-inflammatory medication can be helpful but you must take advice from your GP or Pharmacist

Avoid walking barefoot



Stretching - Gentle calf stretches can help. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat 3-5 times daily. (A separate calf stretching advice leaflet is available on the podiatry website).



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 fastening
- Ensure there is good cushioning on the sole of the shoe
- Laxity of ankles and feet will benefit from boot footwear with instep support
- 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/>

When will it get better?

Severs will go away with a little time and rest however this may take weeks or several months. Ignoring the pain and trying to play through it will only make the condition worse. With future growth spurts the pain may return and the advice should be followed again. If symptoms persist or get worse, please contact the podiatry service.

