

# Sever's apophysitis of the heel

The aim of this leaflet is to answer some of the questions that you or your child may have about Sever's apophysitis of the heel and its treatment. You will also have an opportunity to discuss any further concerns with us in clinic.

## What is Sever's apophysitis of the heel?

It is an inflammation of the growing area of the heel bone and a fairly common cause of heel pain in young athletes. The average age when this is first detected is 11.5 years. It is more common in boys and in about 60% of patients both feet are affected.

## What causes it?

The cause is unknown but it is thought to be due to repetitive mini traumas to the growth area where the Achilles tendon is attached.

## What are the symptoms?

Typically, patients experience pain at the back of the heel, especially after sports. It may be associated with warmth, swelling, and even redness. Children also have an associated tight Achilles tendon and calf muscle.

## How is it diagnosed?

X-rays are not helpful to make the diagnosis. Diagnosis is usually made based upon examination and consideration of the symptoms.

## What is the natural progression?

It is a condition that usually gets better without treatment, with the closure of the growth plate of the heel bone (usually around the age of 15 for girls and 16 for boys). However, until then, it is normal for symptoms to come and go.

## What are the treatment options?

- **Non-operative:**
  - Avoiding aggravating activities – especially jumping sports.
  - Wearing orthotic heel cups or heel pads.
  - A stretching exercise programme (from the physiotherapists) of the Achilles tendon and calf muscles. This decreases symptoms and decreases recurrent episodes if continued through until adolescence.
  - Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines – your doctor can advise.
- For severe persistent symptoms, a **below-knee plaster** is sometimes used to rest the foot and relieve pain.

## Contact us

If you require any further advice please contact: Children's Foot Clinic Team on 0118 322 5248  
Nina Doherty, Clinical Nurse Specialist 0118 322 8746 or 0118 322 5111, bleep 232.

To find out more about our Trust visit [www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk](http://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk)

**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

RBFT Orthopaedics (Paediatric), February 2023. Next review due: February 2025