

Ask a Foot and Ankle Surgeon

When Should I Worry About My Child's Foot Pain?

by Robert Joseph, DPM, Ph.D., FACFAS (NAPS)—When a child experiences leg pain, parents might not consider the foot as the source, even though some foot disorders can also cause symptoms in the leg. When it comes to foot-related problems, early intervention by an expert is key to proper treatment.

Flatfeet, a general term for the appearance of a foot without a well-developed “arch,” is common in chil-



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dren. While most children with flatfeet have no symptoms, others may exhibit cramping, pain or tenderness in the foot, lower leg or knee; limping or an aversion to athletic activities; and walking because their feet and legs “get tired.” Foot and ankle surgeons can help determine if the pain is related to flatfeet.

When children have these symptoms, parents may think it's temporary “growing pains,” without realizing it could be a foot-related problem. A foot and ankle surgeon will conduct a physical examination to assess the structure and function of the feet and may use imaging studies, such as X-ray or MRI, for a more comprehensive understanding of the specific foot structure.

Children with flatfeet may not have pain or limitation of activity; others experience symptoms related to structural abnormalities of the foot that can be difficult to diagnose. Appropriate care includes orthotic supports or possibly surgery, depending on the condition and its severity. Early evaluation and intervention are the best measures for determining whether treatment is necessary for a quick recovery and return to normal activity.

For more information or to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons' patient education website.

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