

Paediatric Flatfoot Children's

What Is Paediatric Flatfoot?

Flatfoot is common in both children and adults. When this deformity occurs in children, it is referred to as “paediatric flatfoot.” Although there are various forms of flatfoot, they all share one characteristic – partial or total collapse of the arch.

Paediatric flatfoot can be classified as symptomatic or asymptomatic. Symptomatic flatfeet exhibit symptoms such as pain and limitation of activity, while asymptomatic flatfeet show no symptoms. These classifications can assist your foot and ankle surgeon in determining an appropriate treatment plan.

Symptoms

Flatfoot can be apparent at birth or it may not show up until years later. Most children with flatfoot have no symptoms, but some have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Pain, tenderness, or cramping in the foot, leg, and knee
- Outward tilting of the heel
- Awkwardness or changes in walking
- Difficulty with shoes
- Reduced energy when participating in physical activities
- Voluntary withdrawal from physical activities

If a child has no symptoms, treatment is often not required. Instead, the condition will be observed and re-evaluated periodically by the foot and ankle surgeon.

Custom orthotic devices may be considered for some cases of asymptomatic flatfoot.

When the child has symptoms, treatment is required. The foot and ankle surgeon may select one or more of the following non-surgical approaches:

- **Activity modifications.** The child needs to temporarily decrease activities that bring pain as well as avoid prolonged walking or standing.
- **Orthotic devices.** The foot and ankle surgeon can provide custom orthotic devices that fit inside the shoe to support the structure of the foot and improve function.
- **Physical therapy.** Stretching exercises, supervised by your Podiatrist provide relief in some cases of flatfoot.
- **Shoe modifications.** Your Podiatrist will advise you on footwear characteristics that are important for the child with flatfoot.