

Division of Pediatric Orthopaedics

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FLAT FEET

Flat feet are normal for infants and young children. About one in seven children never develop an arch. Children usually have flat feet because they are normally loose-jointed.

The arch of your child's feet

Just as children come in different heights, arches come in different heights. You can usually see the arch when your child's feet hang free over a chair or table. You may also be able to see the arch when your child stands on his or her toes. When standing normally, the arch flattens.

Special concerns

Your child's doctor will be concerned about the arches of your child's feet if they are:

- Very stiff
- Painful
- Very flat
- Arched very high

Treatment

Treatment for flat feet is not necessary. Your child's arches should develop by the age of 6 or 7 years old. Special wedges, shoe inserts or heels are not needed; they can make your child's feet feel uncomfortable and can cost a lot of money.

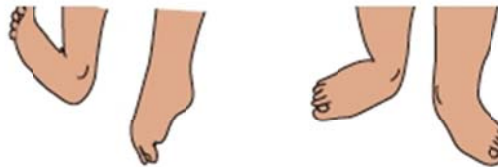
ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this Information.

Did You Know?

One in five children never develops an arch. Most adults with flexible flatfeet have strong, pain free feet.



Most children have low arches because they are loose-jointed. The arch flattens when they are standing and their feet seem to be rolled in and their feet pointed outward.



The arch can be seen when these feet are hanging free or when the child stands on her toes.



Did You Know?

Wearing a pad or insert under the arch of a simple flexible flatfoot can make the child less comfortable...and it's a waste of money!



The physician is concerned if the flatfoot is:



But the physician is most concerned about a high arch because it is most likely to cause pain later.



SHOES

Barefoot people have the best feet!

Your child needs a flexible, soft shoe that allows maximum freedom to develop normally.

1. Points in shoe selection

Shoes are much better too large than too small.



2. Flexible

Stiff supportive shoes are not good for feet because they restrict movement which is needed for developing strength and retaining foot mobility.



A child's foot needs protection from cold and sharp objects, but also needs freedom.



3. Flat sole

Children's falls cause many injuries. A flat sole that is neither slippery nor sticky is best.



4. Soft porous upper

A material that breathes may be best, especially for warm climates.



5. Good shoes needn't be expensive



REMEMBER: The best shoe keeps the foot warm and protected, but allows freedom of motion and space to grow.