

Sever's Disease – Heel Pain

Who gets Sever's disease?

It usually affects highly active children between 8 and 16 years old, during periods of rapid growth. It affects boys more than girls. Sever's disease is more common in children who play sports involving repeated running and/or jumping, such as athletics, football or netball.

What is Sever's disease?

During periods of rapid growth the muscles and tendons in the leg become tighter as the bone becomes longer. As a result the tight muscles of the calf pull on the heel, and with repeated activity (such as running or jumping) this can lead to an irritation where the Achilles (calf) tendon attaches at the back of the heel.

Sever's disease can last for 6 months up to 2 years, however most children who have it will have no long term complications once they have stopped growing.

How can you tell if your child has this?

- Pain with sport or activity in the heel or calf – especially running and jumping sports
- Tenderness where the Achilles tendon attaches to the heel
- There may be tightness of the calf muscles, especially first thing in the morning
- There may be some underlying biomechanical cause e.g. flat feet

A thorough assessment from your Physiotherapist should be the first step to rule out any other conditions and confirm a diagnosis of Sever's disease. X-Ray and MRI are not normally needed to make a diagnosis.

How to treat Sever's disease?

- First step is stopping painful activities, until pain subsides. If your child continues to strain the tendon and its attachment then the condition may worsen. Ice packs can help provide pain relief during this period.
- You should then consult a Physiotherapist on how best to manage the condition.
- Treatment for this condition include: Orthotics, gradual stretching and strengthening exercises to address the underlying cause of the problem, and correction of any underlying biomechanical issues.

If you have any further concerns or queries regarding Sever's Disease or heel pain, please feel free to contact us and book in for a free assessment at our clinic.



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