



HEEL PAIN IN CHILDREN

By Michael N. Fine, D.P.M.

One of the most common conditions seen in the podiatrists' office is that of heel pain. When seen in a pre-teen or teenager, the cause is often Calcaneal Apophysitis, also known as Sever's Disease.

Sever's Disease is an inflammation of the growth plate (apophysis) in the child's heel. It is often seen in young athletes 9-14 years of age, particularly those active in soccer, football or baseball. Shoes with cleats seem to aggravate the condition. Boys seem to be affected more than girls.

The cause of Sever's Disease is most likely due to an injury of the growth plate with an underlying mechanical problem with the way the foot functions. Often times it is seen in children whose feet "roll-in", or over-pronate, which allows the Achille's Tendon to pull on the heel and irritate the growth plate. The pain often causes the child to limp during and after activities.

Treatment of Sever's Disease begins with rest, ice, Achille's Tendon stretching, anti-inflammatory medication such as Advil, and over-the-counter heel cups or arch supports. If the pain persists, it is important to have the child evaluated by a podiatrist. It may be necessary for the podiatrist to make a pair of custom-made arch supports (orthotics) or to immobilize the foot with a walking cast.

Sever's Disease will almost always respond to one or more of the above treatments, allowing the child to return to their activities in a relatively short amount of time.

Dr. Fine is a podiatrist in private practice at North Kansas City Hospital. He is Board Certified in Podiatric Medicine and Surgery by the American Board of Multiple Specialties in Podiatry, for further information on Sever's Disease or any other foot conditions, he may be contacted at 816-455-8900 or you may visit his web site at www.finefootcarecenter.com.

