

Sever's Disease (Calcaneal Apophysitis)



Sever's Disease or calcaneal apophysitis is the most common cause of heel pain in children. During a growth spurt a child's bones can grow faster than the muscles and tendons. The muscles and tendons can become tight and pull on the bony attachments and growth plates during this time. When the calf muscles and Achilles tendon pull on the attachment to the bottom of the heel bone, this can cause inflammation and pain.

The condition is self-limiting, but learning how to properly manage it to minimize symptoms can help keep one as active as possible.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are pain and tenderness in the heel (can be both heels) that is worsened by physical activities such as running and jumping. Sever's can cause limping and can also be painful with the first steps in the morning.

What is the treatment for Sever's?

- Rest and/or modified participation in aggravating activities (such as running and jumping) that increase pressure on the heel bone.
- Application of ice
- Wearing cushioned shoes and/or cushioned heel cups to help absorb shock and decrease pressure on heels.
- Physical therapy evaluation and treatment including recommendations for an exercise/stretching program, taping, arch supports/heel cups.
- Use of over the counter anti-inflammatory medication if recommended by your MD.
- For severe cases that haven't responded to rest and PT, it may be advised to try a period of immobilization of the foot and ankle.