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Pediatric Heel Pain

Heel pain in children is most often caused by inflammation of the growth plate in the heel. This is known as calcaneal apophysitis or also Sever's Disease. The inflammation is caused due to strain placed on the growth plate. Typically this strain is caused by a "tug-o-war" effect by the Achilles tendon and the plantar fascia. This "tug-o-war" strains the heel at its weakest point, which is the growth plate. Typically this condition is found in youngsters between the ages of 8 to 14-years old. It can occur around a growth spurt, sudden increases in activity or overweight children. It almost always is cured by non-surgical means.

Treatment Plan Options

Heel Cups – We often employ heel cups to help redistribute the force and pressure from the ground over a greater surface area around the heel.

Achilles Stretching – Diligent stretching of the Achilles tendon will relieve the tension and therefore the strain on the growth plate.

Night Splints – These are devices worn at night that help in stretching out the Achilles tendon. These are used when stretching needs to be aggressive or we are concerned of the child's compliance with a stretching program.

Anti-inflammatory Medications – Often a child-safe anti-inflammatory can reduce the inflammation of the growth plate and eliminate the pain

Orthotics – Orthotics are custom-made shoe inserts that can control the function of the foot and prevent excessive strain of the growth plate

Decrease Activity

Appropriate Shoes – The doctor will educate you on the most appropriate shoe for your child.

Physical Therapy – This can also assist in stretching and reducing inflammation.

Surgery – Rarely needed, but can be used to lengthen the tight Achilles tendon.