

## Flat feet

### A parent's guide

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### Introduction

All babies and young children have flat feet. When children start to walk, they stand with their feet far apart and ankles rolled inwards.

This is when parents often notice that their feet are flat. As muscle control develops, children stand and walk with their feet closer together with straight ankles. The arches of the feet can then be seen. Even if their feet appear completely flat, arches will appear when they stand on tiptoes, providing their feet are normal.

### What needs to be done?

If your child is fully active for their age, the joints of their feet and ankles are supple and their feet are not painful, you do not need to seek medical help.

Make sure that their shoes are well-fitting and, for young children, they have ankle support.

If you have an older child with flat feet who complains of pain, most often at the end of the day, they should see a podiatrist.

A podiatrist is a foot specialist who will advise you whether your child needs insoles or arch supports to help with the discomfort.

### Do they cause long-term problems?

Almost all children with flat feet develop normal feet in adulthood. They should be encouraged to be active as normal.

If your child appears to be getting worse as they get older, with more pain or difficulty in walking, they need to see a specialist.

A tiny number of children have flat feet because of problems with their joints or tendons. These children need specialist medical help.