

## **Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction (Flat Feet)**

Flat feet, also called fallen arches, is a condition in which a patient does not have a distinguished arch while standing. Flat feet are relatively common among adult population and are normal among infants, toddlers and young children.

The condition occurs because the tendons holding the foot's joints together are loose. Among children, the fat in the foot is also a contributing factor. An arch will usually appear when children begin standing on their toes. The arch continues to develop throughout childhood, and by adulthood most people have developed normal arches.

Flat feet are generally associated with pronation, a leaning inward of the ankle bones toward the center line. Shoes of children who pronate, when placed side by side, will lean toward each other (after they have been worn long enough for the foot position to remodel their shape).

Flat feet can be recognized while standing. If the arch is in contact with the ground, it's an indication of flat feet. The "Wet Test" is another informal way of testing to determine a person's foot type. By getting the foot wet and then standing on a dry piece of paper, the foot print can be better analyzed. If a significant part of the insole has left a wet mark, it may be an indication of flat feet.

Many people with flat feet do not experience pain or other problems. When pain in the foot, ankle, or lower leg does occur, especially in children, the feet should be evaluated.

If a patient experiences progressive pain related to flat feet, this may be an indication of adult-acquired flatfoot, (tibialis posterior tendonitis). This condition arises when the tendon becomes inflamed, stretched, or torn. If untreated, the condition can result in significant disability to the foot. It can result in the rupture of the tibial posterior tendon which would call for

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications, icing, physical therapy, supportive taping, bracing, and orthotics are common treatments for painful progressive flatfoot. Treatment is subject to the severity of the condition. To prevent further pain or complications, custom orthotics can usually be an effective solution. Note: Please consult your physician before taking any medications. In some cases, a surgery may need to be performed to repair a torn or damaged tendon and restore normal function. In the most severe cases, surgery on the midfoot bones may be necessary to treat the associated flatfoot condition.