

## Flexible Flat Feet in Children



### What are Flexible Flat Feet?

Flexible flat feet occur when the arch of the foot **collapses when standing**, but **returns when sitting, tiptoeing, or lifting the heel**.

This is a **common condition in children** and usually does **not cause pain or long-term problems**.

### Who is affected?

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- Very common in **toddlers and young children**.
  - Can affect **one or both feet**.
  - Most children with flexible flat feet are **otherwise healthy**.

### Causes

- Usually **genetic** – runs in families.
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- Normal variation in **foot development**.
- Often due to **loose ligaments or muscle flexibility**.
- Rarely caused by injury or an underlying medical condition.

### Signs and Symptoms

- The arch of the foot **disappears when standing**.
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- Feet may appear **flat or rolled inwards**.
  - Usually **painless**.
  - Occasionally, children may **tire easily or complain of foot/leg aches** after activity.
  - No restriction in walking, running, or playing in most cases.

### Diagnosis

- Usually made by a **clinical examination**.
  - X-rays or scans are rarely needed unless there is **pain, severe deformity, or unusual symptoms**.
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### Treatment

#### Most cases

- No treatment is required.
  - Encourage **normal activity, running, and playing**.
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- Shoes should be **comfortable and well-fitting**.

#### If symptoms develop

- **Supportive footwear** or orthotic insoles may help relieve discomfort.
- **Physiotherapy exercises** to strengthen foot and leg muscles.
- Surgery is **rarely needed**, only for severe or persistent problems.

#### When to see a doctor

Seek medical advice if:

- The child **has pain** in the feet, ankles, or legs.
  - The child **tire easily or has difficulty walking**.
  - The foot appears **severely deformed or one foot is different from the other**.
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- There are **other symptoms**, such as limping or swelling.

### Prognosis

- Most children with flexible flat feet **grow up normally without problems**.
- Some arches **develop naturally** as the child grows.
- With monitoring and simple care, children can **walk, run, and play normally**.

### Key Points

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- Flexible flat feet are **common and usually harmless**.
- Most children **do not need treatment**.
- Supportive footwear or exercises may help if there is **pain or discomfort**.
- Persistent pain or severe deformity should be **assessed by a doctor**.

### References:

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- NHS: [Flat Feet in Children](#)
  - American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society – Pediatric Flatfoot
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