

Flat Feet (Pes Planus)

Flat feet (the lack of an arch when standing) are common in all age groups.

There are two types of flat feet, flexible and rigid. If an arch is present when standing “tip-toe” the flat foot is flexible. Flexible flat feet rarely produces symptoms or requires treatment. If an arch is not present when standing “tip-toe,” the flat foot may be “rigid.” Rigid flat feet are more likely to require further evaluation and possible treatment.

Treatment

Generally, there is no treatment needed. However, a child with painful flexible flat feet may benefit from soft arch supports. These provide only comfort and do not “create” an arch. Corrective shoes and bracing do not “create” an arch.

Facts About Flexible Flat Feet

- Flexible flat feet are a common, usually painless condition that is often normal.
- Corrective shoes or inserts do not “create” an arch.
- Flexible flat feet will not interfere with your child’s ability to learn to walk or play sports.
- Shoe salespersons may tell you expensive shoes will help your child walk better. This is not true. Regular, inexpensive shoes may be worn.
- If you have questions about shoes, please see the Orthotics handout “Children’s Shoes” (Ort-013).