

What are flat feet?

About one in seven children never develop an arch. The arch is the curve on the bottom of the foot. This is known as flat feet. Flat feet are normal for infants and young children. Children most often have flat feet because they are loose-jointed. This means the ligaments in the foot don't support the arch.



The arch of your child's feet

Arches come in different heights. You can normally see the arch when your child's feet hang free over a chair or table. You may also be able to see the arch when your child stands on their toes. When standing normally, the arch flattens.

When might flat feet be a problem?

Your child's doctor may be concerned about the arches of your child's feet if they are:

- Very stiff.
- Painful.
- Very flat.
- Very high.

How are flat feet treated?

Treatment for flat feet is not normally needed. Your child's arches should develop by their teenage years. In some cases, the health care provider may recommend arch supports or physical therapy to help relieve pain in your child's foot.



ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has special health care needs not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.