

Flat feet, or lack of an apparent arch when standing, may be due to lax ligaments in the feet or a family history. This is a very common, painless condition which does not require treatment.

Babies generally have fat pads over the instep of their feet, giving the appearance of a flat foot. As the baby develops, the soft tissues of the foot tighten, creating an arch. Most flat feet disappear by two to three years of age.

There are two types of flat feet, flexible and rigid. A very simple test will help determine if your child has flexible flat feet. Have your child stand on their toes and observe for the arch to appear. If an arch is not present, your child may have "rigid flat feet" and your physician will determine if treatment is needed.

What is the Treatment for Flat Feet?

Treatment for flat feet is symptomatic. Older children with flat feet may wear soft arch supports. These provide only comfort and do not correct the foot. Corrective shoes and bracing also do not correct the foot. Rarely is surgery ever needed.

Facts about Flat Feet

- Flat feet are a common, painless condition
- Corrective shoes or supports are an unnecessary expense and will not improve flexible flat feet
- Shoe salespersons may tell you expensive shoes will help your child walk better. This is not true. Regular, inexpensive shoes may be worn.
- Flat feet will not interfere with your child's ability to learn to walk