Flat Feet in Childhood
Community Podiatry and Paediatric Physiotherapy

Flat feet are characterized by the absence of an arch when standing. Babies and young children typically have flat feet. This is a normal stage in foot development.

If you have concerns
If you are worried that your child has aches or pain in their legs or feet then they can be referred to a podiatrist or physiotherapist. If you require further advice contact the physiotherapy or podiatry service at your local clinic.

© Copyright, Podiatry, Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust, Flat Feet leaflet, Reference Number 150, September 2011, Review date September 2013

If you require further advice contact the physiotherapy or podiatry service at your local clinic.

This leaflet can also be made available upon request in Braille, audio cassette, large print or in other languages.

Chinese
此份單張備有中文譯本，請垂詢索取。

Kurdish Sorani
کەرەکەیەدە، وەمەنگە ژیزەکەی بەرەوەستەد شوەدروکەیەمەژەبە. وەمەنگە ژیزەکەیەمەژەبە.

Lithuanian
Paprasčiau, žiūrėkite galima gauti ir lietuvių kalba.

Polish
Niniejsza ulotka może być na życzcie dostępna w języku polskim.

Portuguese
Este folheto também pode estar disponível, sob pedido, em português.

Russian
Эту брошюру можно также получить по желанию на Русском языке.
At 2 years old almost all children (94%) have flat feet (medical name - *pes planus*). The arches start developing at 3 to 4 years of age and nears completion by 8 years. At 10 years old about 4% of children have flat feet.

The prevalence of flat feet is greater in children with more flexible joints. Arch development may take longer in these children however this is a variation on normal development. It is important to remember that all children develop at different rates.

Flat feet are also associated with heavier children and children who often wore shoes at an early age. Research indicates that flat feet in childhood tends to improve with time.

A flat foot is often a normal variation and should not cause any disability. Unless there are problems with pain or balance, treatments such as inserts or corrective shoes are not usually indicated.

If you can’t see an arch when your child stands on tiptoes then they may have a rigid flat foot.

Treatment is only usually indicted if there is pain in the feet/legs, and then supportive insoles may help. Stretches may also be advised to alleviate discomfort. Insoles do not change the shape of the foot arch of either a rigid or flexible flat foot.

**In summary**

- Flat feet in babies and young children is a normal stage in foot development.
- Flat feet usually improve as your child grows - remembering that children develop at different rates.
- Children with more flexible joints may take a little longer to develop a foot arch.
- A foot arch is usually present by the age of 7-8 years of age, however height and shape of the arch varies considerably from child to child.

Insoles do not change the shape of the foot arch, but may be required sometimes for older children experiencing pain.