

SEVER'S DISEASE

Calcaneal apophysitis also known as Sever's disease is common in young rapidly growing children. Often noted to be associated with husky children it is actually much more prevalent in very active children. Typical age range is 8-13 years of age, during rapid growth and development. It is usually first noticed by a parent observing their child limping after exercise. At this age the growth plate in the heel bone or calcaneus has not closed. The constant pressure applied to this growth plate from the Achilles tendon causes inflammation of the growth plate. Children who remain active despite the pain and inflammation develop Sever's disease. The pain of Sever's disease is most notable on squeezing the heel bone where the Achilles tendon attaches on the back of the heel. X-rays are useful in evaluating the growth plate for any abnormalities. Depending on the severity a few weeks rest, no running no sports, may resolve the pain for most and all will outgrow eventually. This truly is a growing pain, when the growth stops so does the condition. The danger is that too much pressure from sports can disrupt the growth of the heel bone in very rare instances. In these rare instances where the child cannot be kept from running or x-rays show changes in the bone development, casting for 2-3 weeks may be initiated. In most instances decreased activity, the use of running type shoes with additional sport arch supports, or heel lift are sufficient. Proper warm up prior to re-initiating any sport should include gentle calf stretching exercises and an ankle wrap or taping.