

Health Bulletin



Are Fallen Arches A Real Foot Problem?

(NAPSA)—Are “fallen arches” an actual foot disorder or just a catch phrase used all the time to describe chronically sore feet?

According to the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS), fallen arches or flat feet is a legitimate medical condition that affects about 5 percent of the U.S. population. Flat feet can be present at birth or develop over decades of walking, running and overall time spent on the feet, especially on hard surfaces in the workplace.

There are several types of flat-foot conditions that occur in adults. The most common type is called adult-acquired flatfoot, and it is caused by overstretching a tendon that supports the arch. This leads to a partial or complete collapse of the arch and produces the flattened appearance on the bottom of the foot. Another common type is called flexible flatfoot in which the foot is flat when standing and returns to a normal arch in non-weight-bearing positions.

“In adults, flat feet can be very painful and limit your ability to exercise and stay in good cardiovascular health,” said Kris DiNucci, DPM, FACFAS, an Omaha-based foot and ankle surgeon. “It’s tough to be active, shed excess pounds, and maintain a healthy lifestyle if your feet hurt constantly, so it’s important to seek medical attention to identify the problem early and intercede before it progresses to a serious, activity-limiting foot problem.”



Ignoring foot pain can make the problem worse.

Pain is the primary reason patients seek medical treatment for flat feet, DiNucci said, and first-line therapy may include activity modifications or limitations, stretching exercises, custom shoe orthotics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications. As the condition worsens, pain and tenderness in the arch become more severe and some patients may not be able to rise up on their toes at all or without pain.

If the response to initial treatment is unsatisfactory, a variety of surgical procedures may be considered to relieve pain and improve foot function. In cases where the first-line evaluation and treatment were provided by a primary care physician, referral to a foot and ankle surgeon is strongly recommended.

For further information about adult flatfoot conditions and to locate a foot and ankle surgeon in your area, visit www.Foot-Physicians.com.