

## Contact us

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

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## Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the PALS and complaints team on freephone 0800 328 7971.

If you need the information in another language or format please ask us

Nëse ky informacion ju nevojitet në një gjuhë apo format tjetër, ju lutem na kontaktoni

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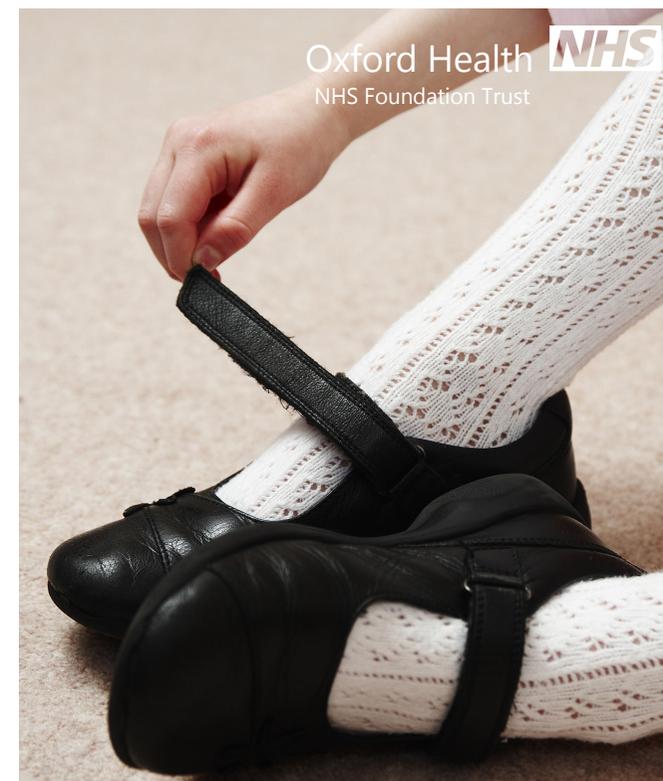
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The Podiatry Service is part of our  
Older People Directorate.

OP 039.14



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Podiatry

## Flatfeet in children

## What are flatfeet?

Flatfeet or pes planus is where the arch of the inside of the foot is flatter than normal. Most children will have flat feet up until approximately five to eight years of age.

Around this age, significant changes in the positioning of bones and joints of the feet and legs occur which can lead to the natural development of an arch; however the height and shape will vary from child to child.

By the age of 10 years old about 4% of children will have flat feet. It has been learnt in the last 30 years that most people with flexible flat feet have no more foot problems than others.

## There are two different types of flatfeet:

**Flexible flatfeet** – this is a common form of flat foot. When your child stands on tiptoes you should be able to see an arch develop and the foot is also flexible when the joints are moved when not standing. This shows that the joints of the foot are working normally. Children with over

flexible joints in general may take longer to develop an arch in their foot.

**Rigid flatfoot** - this is a group of rare conditions that are congenital. It is a joining of two or more of the bones in the middle of the foot and is characterised by a stiffness of the foot (unable to see an arch when on tiptoes) and can later result in pain and spasms.

## When do we treat flatfeet?

**Rigid flatfeet** - this type of foot can lead to severe symptoms and it may be necessary to send your child to be assessed by a surgeon. Treatment is dependent on the presence of symptoms and may initially be best managed with monitoring and/or insoles. If symptoms persist or worsen then surgery may be indicated.

**Flexible flatfoot** - most of this type of flat foot are painless and cause no interference with growth or physical activities and treatment should not be provided if there are no symptoms. Treatment may only be necessary in this foot type if the flat foot is severe or causing symptoms in the foot or leg. Treatment may involve stretching exercises for the calf muscles, pain killers, change to activity levels, advice about

supportive footwear and/ or prescription foot orthotics (insoles) to help support the feet.

It is important to note that any type of insole therapy is not likely to "cure" the feet. Orthoses aim to maintain the integrity of the foot during function and prevent further symptoms. They are not capable of changing the shape of your child's foot.

Where orthoses are provided, these are to be replaced as necessary during growth. Treatment will be continued until pain resolves, upon skeletal maturity, or the clinician feels it is no longer necessary.