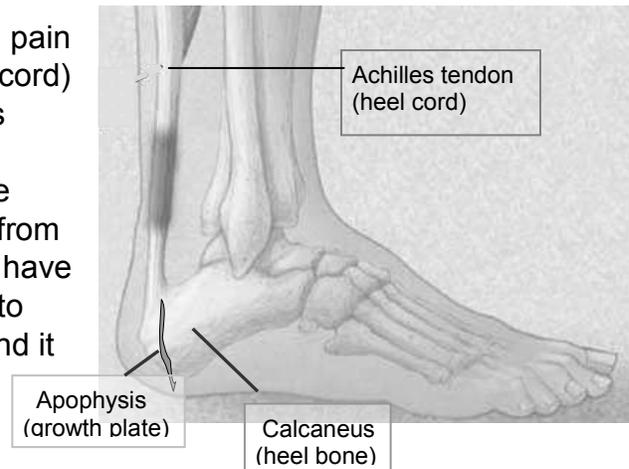


## Sever's Apophysitis

(Sever's Disease or Calcaneal Apophysitis)

### What is it Sever's Apophysitis?

Sever's apophysitis is a common cause of heel pain in growing children. The Achilles' tendon (heel cord) on the back of the ankle pulls on the heel. This causes irritation of the growth plate on the heel bone. Rarely, there can be an avulsion fracture when a small piece of the bone is pulled away from the rest of the heel. About 60% of children will have it in both heels. It may last from a few months to two years. It can be very painful with activity and it will feel better with rest.



### What causes it?

This is an overuse type of injury that gets worse during growth spurts. It is most common between the ages of 8 to 12 years old. It can happen when your child increases activity, like running and jumping. It is more common in people with tight heel cords.

### How does this affect my child?

Your child will have pain with activity. Your child may not be able to participate fully in their sport. When left untreated, the pain may limit simple activities of daily life.

### What tests might be done?

Often no tests are needed. X-rays are sometimes done.

### How is it treated?

Your child may have to stop or limit activity that causes pain. Stretching exercises for the heel cord may help.

1. Stretch both legs twice.
2. Hold each stretch for about 30 seconds.
3. Do not bounce while stretching.
4. Stretching should not cause pain.
5. Stretch 3 to 5 times a day.

### Heel cord stretch

Keep both heels on the floor with feet facing straight ahead. Put arms on the wall and bend the front knee. Have your child gently lean forward, keeping the back leg straight. They should feel a gentle stretch in the heel cord of the straight leg.



## Treatment (Continued)



### Hamstring stretch

Sit on the floor or a bench. With a straight leg, have your child lean forward and touch gently grasp their toes. If it is easier, have your child wrap a towel around the ball of the foot. Pull back slowly, until your child feels a gentle stretch in the heel cord.

### Icing the heel after activity can help reduce swelling and pain. Here's how to ice the heel.

1. Sit down on a chair or couch and put your heel up in a relaxed position.
2. Take a ready made ice pack, plastic bag full of ice or a package of frozen peas or corn and cover it with a light towel or cloth.
3. Put it on the heel that is hurting.
4. Keep it on for 10 to 15 minutes.
5. Put cold pack back in the freezer.
6. Don't eat the frozen vegetables once they are used for icing.

To help limit more pain:

- Use the shoe insert or heel lift provided by your sports medicine doctor.
- Ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medicines may help.
- Do strengthening and balance exercises once pain is better.

### When can my child return to activity?

Most young athletes can play through a little bit of pain without doing any damage. However, playing through moderate or severe pain can worsen the condition. This will make it harder to treat. Severe pain will also change the way your child uses their leg muscles, which can increase the risk for other leg injuries. The doctor will help you decide when and how your child can safely get back up to full activity.

### What follow-up care might be needed?

The doctor should check your child in 4 to 6 weeks. Your child may need to be seen more often if there is pain and limited function.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has steady pain or pain that gets worse and is not helped by pain medicine.
- Has more swelling or bruising.
- Is having a harder time walking or running.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**