

PLANTAR FASCIITIS

Two common conditions that can cause pain to the bottom of the heel are plantar fasciitis and heel spur(s). Although there are many causes of heel pain in both children and adults, most can be effectively treated without surgery. When chronic heel pain fails to respond to conservative treatment, surgical care may be warranted.

Plantar fasciitis is an inflammation of a fibrous band of tissue in the bottom of the foot that extends from the heel bone to the toes. This tissue can become inflamed for many reasons, most commonly from irritation by placing too much stress (such as excess running and jumping) and stretch from the foot rolling inward, on the bottom of the foot.

Heel Spur(s) or heel spur syndrome are most often the result of stress on the muscles and fascia of the foot. This stress may form a spur on the bottom of the heel. While most spurs are painless others may produce chronic pain.

The most common treatment for painful arches and heels involves biomechanical correction. Customized OTC arch supports and custom orthotics may limit the abnormal stretch and rolling inward which decreases the tension on the ligament and plantar foot structures. Injection therapy with local anesthetic and occasional steroid therapy has been shown to produce some symptomatic relief. Physical therapy may produce a transient improvement.

Based on the condition and the chronic nature of the disease, heel surgery can provide relief of pain and restore mobility in many cases. The type of procedure is based on examination and usually consists of plantar fascia release, with or without heel spur excision. There have been various modifications and surgical enhancements regarding surgery of the heel.

There are many other causes of heel pain, which has become one of the most common foot problems. Among the causes are stress fractures, entrapped nerves, bruises, bursitis, arthritis (including gout), deterioration of the fat pad on the heel, improper shoes, and obesity. Most of these conditions will be treated non-surgically, though surgery may be recommended in some instances.