

# Flat Feet in Children

## Information for Parents

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Flat feet are where the arch that is usually seen along the inside of the foot is not visible, or is reduced, when standing.

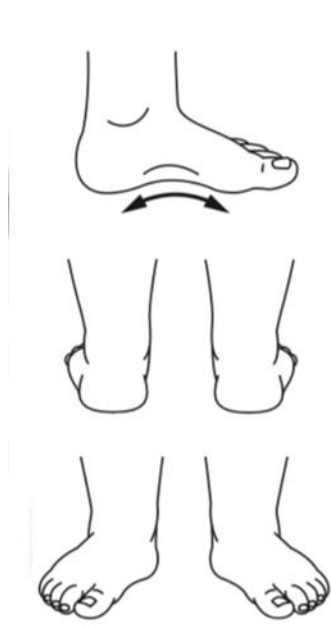


Figure 1. Children's feet may have an arch

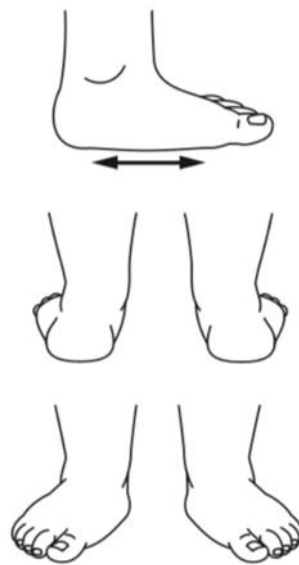


Figure 2. Flat feet appear flat with no arch

Flat feet are usually flexible. This means that you can see the arch when the feet are off the ground, such as when sitting or when standing on tip toes.

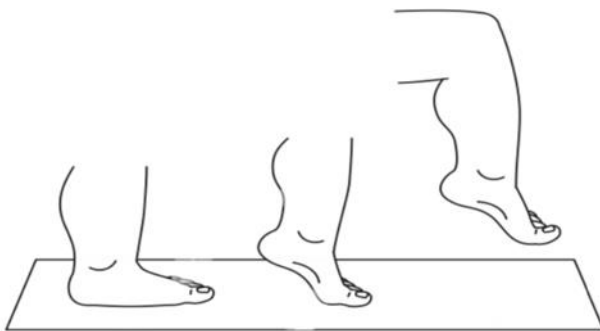


Figure 3. Flexible flat feet have an arch when the foot is off the ground

Flat feet are normal in children. They can be caused by having more fat in their feet which alters their shape and appearance and hides the developing arch. Children also have looser joints than adults which can cause feet to be flat.

Sometimes, flat feet run in families and will be seen in other relatives.

Before the age of 3 years most children have flat feet. Usually, foot arches are formed by the age of 8 years, but some children will always have flat feet and this is their normal foot shape. One in five children never develop a foot arch.

Many adults have flat feet and have no long-term problems or pain.

Flexible flat feet in children do not require treatment. Exercises or shoe inserts will not make an arch develop, but may be recommended in some cases to help with some symptoms.

Contact your doctor if:

- Your child has pain in their feet.
- Your child's activity is limited because of their feet.
- Only one foot is affected.

Images courtesy of The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne.

**Department:** Orthopaedic  
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**Site:** Lincoln County Hospital

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## References

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