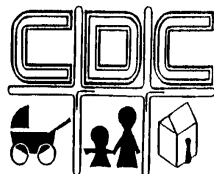


## Will it get better?

- 97% of children have flat feet so the majority will improve as they get older.
- 1 in 5 adults (20%) have flat feet and it does not normally cause any problems.
- You do not need to restrict your child's activities. (Walking, running, jumping or doing foot exercises will not make the flat feet better or worse. )
- Surgery may be required if your child has a rigid flat foot but this will be discussed with an orthopaedic doctor and is rare.

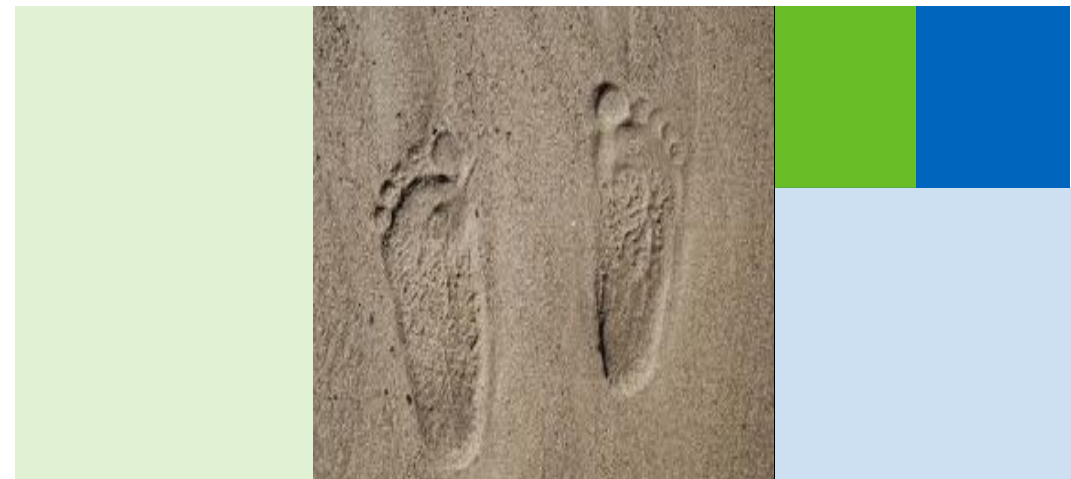
If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The Paediatric Physiotherapy Department  
The Child Development Centre  
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## Paediatric Physiotherapy

### Flat Feet in Children



**An information leaflet for parents who feel their child has flat feet or fallen arches**

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## What Are Flat Feet?

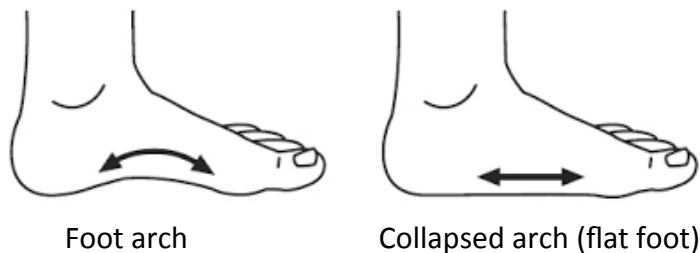
Most feet have an arch along the inside of the foot. The term “flat feet” describes the shape of this arch in standing and that it may be lower so more of the foot is in contact with the floor.

It is normal for children under the age of 3 to have flat feet. The arch does not start to develop until after this age up to the age of about 8 years.

## What Causes Flat Feet?

Flat feet may be rigid or flexible.

**Flexible Flat feet** are very common in young children. There are lots of small bones in the foot which are held together by ligaments. Flat feet are usually due to soft ligaments between the bones, so when your child stands up the arch falls down. It is normal for these ligaments to be more flexible in young children and should not cause any pain.



**Rigid Flat Feet** are uncommon. Rarely, a child has an abnormality of the bones in their feet which causes a stiff and painful foot. This requires a referral to the orthopaedic team.

## Will My Child Need Treatment?

If your child is active and not complaining of pain they do not need treatment for flat feet.

If they are complaining of pain and are limited with how much they can do e.g - running, walking, activities then they may require a referral to either Physiotherapy, Podiatry or Orthopaedics.

## What Treatment is Available?

There is usually no need for treatment although treatment may be considered if your child has pain.

Treatment consists of corrective insoles to put inside your shoe to support your child's foot and/or exercises to address any tightness in some of the muscles in the foot.

These will not change the position of the foot, therefore it is not a cure; however it may relieve pain or loss of function.

If your child is not complaining of pain and is active they do not need treatment.