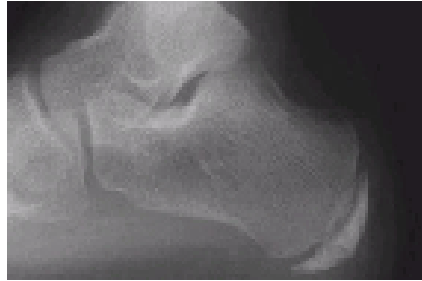


**PEDIATRIC HEEL PAIN**  
**Sever's Disease**

Sever's disease occurs in children when the growing part of the heel is injured. This growing part is called the growth plate. The foot is one of the first body parts to grow to full size. This usually occurs in early puberty. During this time, bones often grow faster than muscles and tendons. As a result, muscles and tendons become tight. The heel area is less flexible. During weight-bearing activity (activity performed while standing), the tight heel tendons may put too much pressure at the back of the heel (where the Achilles tendon attaches). This can injure the heel.



*Open growth plate in the heel bone*

**When is my child most at risk for Sever's disease?**

Children are at risk for this condition when they are in the early part of the growth spurt in early puberty. Sever's disease is most common in physically active girls 8 to 10 years old and in physically active boys 10 to 12 years old. Soccer players and gymnasts often get Sever's disease, but children who do any running or jumping activity may be affected. Sever's disease rarely occurs in older teenagers because the back of the heel has finished growing by the age of 15.

In Sever's disease, heel pain can be in one or both heels. It usually starts after a child begins a new sports season or a new sport. Your child may walk with a limp. The pain may increase when he or she stands on tiptoe. Your child's heel may hurt if you squeeze both sides toward the very back.

**Treatment**

- Cut down or stop any activity that causes heel pain.
- Apply ice to the injured heel for 25 minutes 3 times a day.
- Children with a high arch, flat feet or bowed legs, arch supports or heel cups may be considered.
- The child should never go barefoot.
- In cases of severe heel pain, medication such as acetaminophen (one brand name: Tylenol) or ibuprofen (some brand names: Advil, Motrin, Nuprin) may help. Topical Diclofenac gel 8% to be applied to the heel four times daily.
- Stretching exercises are important to stretch the calf muscles, and the tendons on the back of the leg. The child should do these stretches 5 times each, 2 or 3 times a day. Each stretch should be held for 20 seconds.



*With proper care, your child should feel better within 2 weeks to 2 months. Your child can start playing sports again only when the heel pain is gone. Your doctor will let you know when physical activity is safe.*