

## Common podiatric problems affecting children



**F**lat or pronated feet: over-pronation, characterised by inward rolling of the feet and ankles, either as a result of flat feet or other causes can result in ankle, knee, hip and lower back injuries, with serious implications for long-term gait and biomechanics. These conditions can sometimes resolve with age, however prescriptive orthotics are recommended to provide support and to prevent serious damage and long-term ill effects on the rest of the body.

**Severs disease:** in teens, pain around the heels is usually a sign of Severs disease, a condition caused by the Achilles tendon placing extra strain on the heel bone and swelling in the growth plate around the heel. Severs disease will ultimately resolve as the growth plate around the heel bone fully develops and the bones fuse by approximately age 15, but damaging foot problems can develop through altered biomechanics. Early treatment can relieve discomfort and prevent the incidence of additional injury.

**Osgood-Schlatters disease:** this variant of knee pain is often caused by poor biomechanics of the lower leg. The prescription of corrective orthotics can reduce or eliminate pain.

**Ingrown toenails:** ingrown toenails can be present at birth and are common in growing feet, particularly as shoes become too tight. Clinical treatment is recommended to avoid infection and minor surgery may be required for more serious cases.

**Viruses and bacterial infections:** warts and Athlete's foot are the most common virus and bacterial infections affecting children. The prevalence of these conditions is via unsanitary conditions at swimming pools and similar environments where viruses and bacteria can easily be contracted by barefoot walking on wet floors.

Conditions including in-toeing, out-toeing, bowed legs and knocked knees are seen to varying degrees in children under the age of four years. Early diagnosis and treatment of these conditions is crucial to avoid long-term biomechanical problems.

**F**oot problems in children can have serious effects on gait and mobility and, if left untreated or not referred to a podiatrist, can carry through to adulthood. Active lifestyles coupled with growth create constantly changing conditions for kids' feet, which can result in injury, infection and biomechanical problems impacting on the entire body.



Proactive Podiatry  
Monique Harding

23 Roopena Street  
Ingle Farm 5098

[E-monique@propod.com.au](mailto:E-monique@propod.com.au)

A proud member of the Australian Podiatry Association (SA)