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INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Plantar fasciitis

This leaflet provides information on the common condition of plantar fasciitis and an overview of treatment options available.

What is the condition?
Plantar fasciitis means inflammation of the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a strong band of tissue (similar to a ligament) which stretches from the heel to the middle bones of the feet. It supports the arch of the foot.



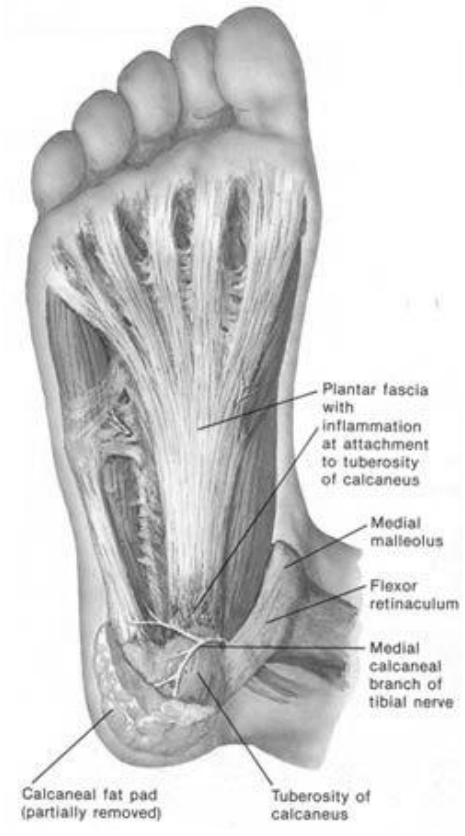
What are the signs and symptoms?
Pain on the underside of the heel that is aggravated in the morning and with prolonged activity, for example a long walk. Pain can also be increased with a sudden stretch of the sole of the foot, for example walking upstairs or on tip-toes.
Pain usually eases on resting the foot. Gentle exercises can help ease the pain as the day goes on.

Does anything increase the risk?
Small injuries to the plantar fascia can cause inflammation and symptoms.

The injury is usually near to where it attaches to the heel bone.

Who gets plantar fasciitis?
Plantar fasciitis is a common cause of heel pain. It mainly affects people over 40 and is more common in women and athletes. Situations where it is more likely to occur include the following:

- Increased amount of walking, standing and running.
- Wearing shoes with poor cushioning.
- Sudden weight gain or being overweight will put extra strain on the heel.
- Overuse or sudden stretching of the sole.
- Tightness of the Achilles tendon (at the bottom of the calf muscles above the heel).



Often there is no apparent cause, particularly in older people. A common wrong belief is that the pain is caused by a bony growth or "spur" coming from the heel bone (calcaneum). Many people have a bony spur of the heel bone, but this is not usually the cause of the pain.

What can you do to help yourself?
Symptoms can take 6-18 months or more to disappear. However, the following may speed recovery of plantar fasciitis:

- **Weight reduction**

Reducing your weight if you are overweight will substantially reduce the stresses being placed on the plantar fascia.

- **Rest**

Rest the foot as much as possible. Reduce the intensity of your activities. Avoid prolonged standing and excess walking or running.

- **Footwear**

Do not walk barefoot on hard surfaces. Choose shoes with cushioned heels and a good arch support. A laced shoe rather than open sandals is probably best. Avoid old or worn shoes which may not give good cushion to the heel.

- **Ice**

Ice will help in the acute phase of plantar fasciitis and can be used after activities to prevent soreness.
Apply a frozen drink bottle, wrapped in a towel, to the sore area for 15-20 minutes.

- **Pain relief**

Please talk to your GP about the most appropriate pain relief.

- **Physiotherapy**

Regular gentle exercises will gently loosen up and strengthen the tendons and fascia above and below the heel. Examples of exercises commonly used by physiotherapists are included in this leaflet.

- **Surgery**

Surgery may be considered in certain circumstances.

If your symptoms significantly worsen and you are unable to manage them please contact your GP or physiotherapist.

Contact details
Physiotherapy Outpatients Department
Clinic 10
King's Mill Hospital
Mansfield Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Notts
NG17 4JL

Clinic telephone number: 01623 672384.
Opening times: 8am - 4.15pm, Monday to Friday.

Exercises
It is important to note that the exercises shown on this leaflet are only an example of exercises available for your condition. Your physiotherapist will advise you on the most appropriate treatments for you.

Stretches - hold for up to 10 seconds

Hamstring stretch



Place affected heel on a step with toes pulled up. Keeping a straight back, gently lean forward, feeling a stretch down the back of your leg.

_____ reps ____ /day

Calf stretch



Place affected leg behind you and straighten with heel on floor. Lean forward and hold stretch in calf, keeping toes facing forward.

_____ reps ____ /day

Soleus stretch



Place the affected leg behind you with heel on floor. Bend both knees and lean forward and hold stretch in lower calf.

_____ reps _____ /day

Plantar stretch



Place the affected foot on the edge of a step or wall. Lean forward and hold the stretch on the underside of your foot.

_____ reps _____ /day

Strengthening exercises



While standing or walking, raise your heels off the floor. Increase your distance or heel raises as pain allows.



A) Stand on the edge of a step, raise your heels and slowly lower the heels towards the floor.

B) Raise and lower with a slight lean to the affected side _____ reps _____/day

C) Single leg raise and lower _____ reps _____ /day



Place your foot over a towel, with your toes to the floor, scrunch the towel.

_____ minutes.



Use a frozen bottle of water underneath the foot. Roll it up and down the arch.

_____ minutes.

These exercises should not cause an increase in symptoms for longer than 15 minutes following exercise. If they do, then you are doing too much and need to reduce the level of exercise. Start slowly and progress as you are able.

Further sources of information
NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions
Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)
PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222
Newark Hospital: 01636 685692
Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email: sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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