

Sever's disease

ORTHOPAEDIC FACT SHEET 7

Sever's disease is a common cause of heel pain in childhood and early adolescence. The condition often occurs in children who are highly active, particularly in sports involving running and jumping. In Sever's disease repeated running and jumping leads to a small injury where the calf muscle tendon attaches to the heel bone (**Figure 1**). The child may limp and complain of pain during or after activity. One or both feet may be affected.

A check-up with your child's doctor will confirm whether your child has Sever's. Your doctor will notice tenderness and, in some cases, swelling around the heel bone. Special tests or X-rays are generally not necessary.

There is no specific treatment for Sever's disease, but the child should learn how to manage the symptoms. Continuing sport or physical activity is not harmful but may make the pain worse, so it may be better to temporarily stop or modify activities that cause pain. Sport shoes should be comfortable and fit well, and symptoms can be treated with ice packs. Inserting gel heel pads into shoes and daily calf-stretching exercises (**Figure 2**) (especially before and after sports) may also help.

Pain usually settles within 6-12 months but sometimes symptoms may persist for up to two years. Children with Sever's disease recover completely with no long-term problems.

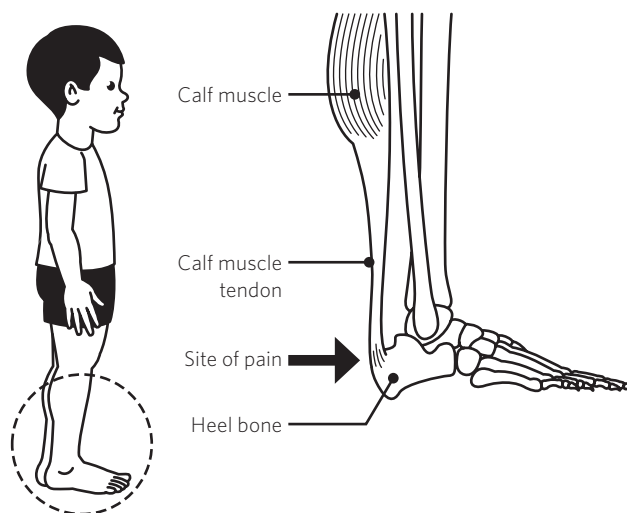


Figure 1. In Sever's disease there is pain where the calf muscle tendon attaches to the heel bone

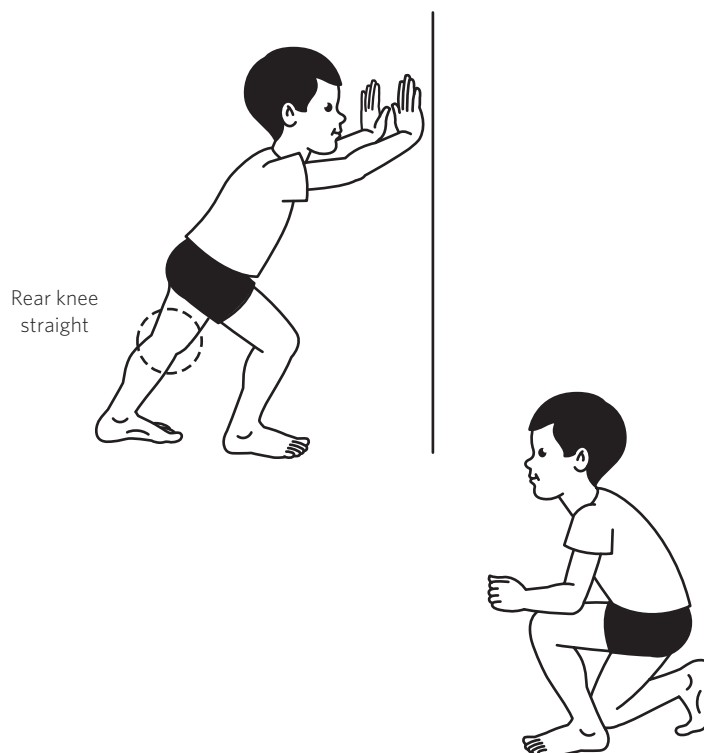


Figure 2. Calf stretches for Sever's disease