

You may have read on our site and others the importance of getting your children's feet checked as they are growing. But you may not understand why. This article is a great visual example of what can happen when children have flat feet and are not wearing the correct shoes for their foot type.

At birth, we are born with flat feet. But over time as we grow, our arches start to develop into the foot type that mom and dad have given us. Some will develop into severely flat feet. This foot type never develops an arch, no matter what the pediatrician may tell you. And the more active this child becomes, the more important it is to have them in the appropriate shoes to help them develop without pain or limitations.

Below you will see an example of an 11 year old boy who complained of pain in his arches and ankles. It was worse when he tried to run which was getting harder and harder to do. He was also starting to have some knee pain. His parents were told by his pediatrician that he would grow out of it. This picture shows that he has no arch and what we consider a "collapsed arch".



These are the shoes they thought would be best, but really were not sure because all his shoes ended up looking like this. These shoes are about 3 months old. Notice how they are very worn on the inside of the heel. This is because of his severe flat foot deformity. It would be pretty hard to run like this don't you think?

So what do you do at this point? There are 2 ways to treat this child. First, we started with better shoes. Not all shoes are made the same. A stability or motion control athletic shoe is best because it reduces the amount of arch collapse when the foot hits the ground. The shoe you see above is a neutral shoe which has a much softer sole and cannot support flat foot deformities well. The next thing we did was place a Lynco full length sport semi-custom orthotic inside the shoe, replacing the factory insole. This prevents the collapse in the shoe and helps put the foot in better alignment with the ankle and leg, reducing pain. Below, you will see the major improvement just these 2 simple things made.



His feet do not collapse in the shoes and he can now run pain free. Now, we started with a semi-custom insert to get him used to wearing something like that in his shoes. He will need a true custom orthotic in the future to reduce the long term effects of flat feet.

The 2nd option for this deformity is surgery. This can be addressed with surgery and is discussed on our site as well. But at FAANT we find that the majority of our patients do remarkably well with the basics. If pain does not resolve with the basics, then we talk about surgery.