

TODAY'S PODIATRIST TALKS ABOUT

HEEL PAIN

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Why Does Heel Pain Occur?

Heel pain is generally the result of faulty biomechanics (walking gait abnormalities) that place too much stress on the heel bone and the soft tissues that attach to it. The stress may also result from injury or a bruise incurred while walking, running, or jumping on hard surfaces; wearing poorly constructed footwear; or being overweight. Heel pain is also common among children ages 8–13 due to a rise in sports activity between these ages.

Causes

1. Plantar Fasciitis—inflammation of the band of fibrous connective tissue running along the bottom of the foot. This condition is common among athletes who tend to do extensive walking and running.

2. Excessive Pronation—excessive flattening of the foot (pronation) creates tension/pulling on the fascial band, often with reactive bone formation (spurring). Flattening of the arch is aggravated by a tight Achilles tendon.

3. Heel Spur—a bony growth on the underside of the heel bone.

4. Improper or Inadequate Foot Support—walking barefoot; walking in socks, slippers, or flats; or wearing shoes with flexible soles lacking adequate support.

Other Causes

- Sever's Disease
- Haglund's Deformity
- Achilles Tendinitis
- Bone Bruises
- Stress Fractures



CONT. ON OTHER SIDE

HEEL PAIN

Prevention and Podiatric Medical Care

- Wear shoes that fit well.
- Wear the proper shoes for each activity.
- Do not wear shoes that have excessive wear on heels or soles.
- Prepare properly before exercising. Stretch before and after walking and jumping.
- Pace yourself when you participate in athletic activities.
- Don't underestimate your body's need for rest and good nutrition.
- Lose weight, if you are obese.

If pain or other symptoms of inflammation, redness, swelling, and heat persist, limit normal daily activities and contact a podiatrist.

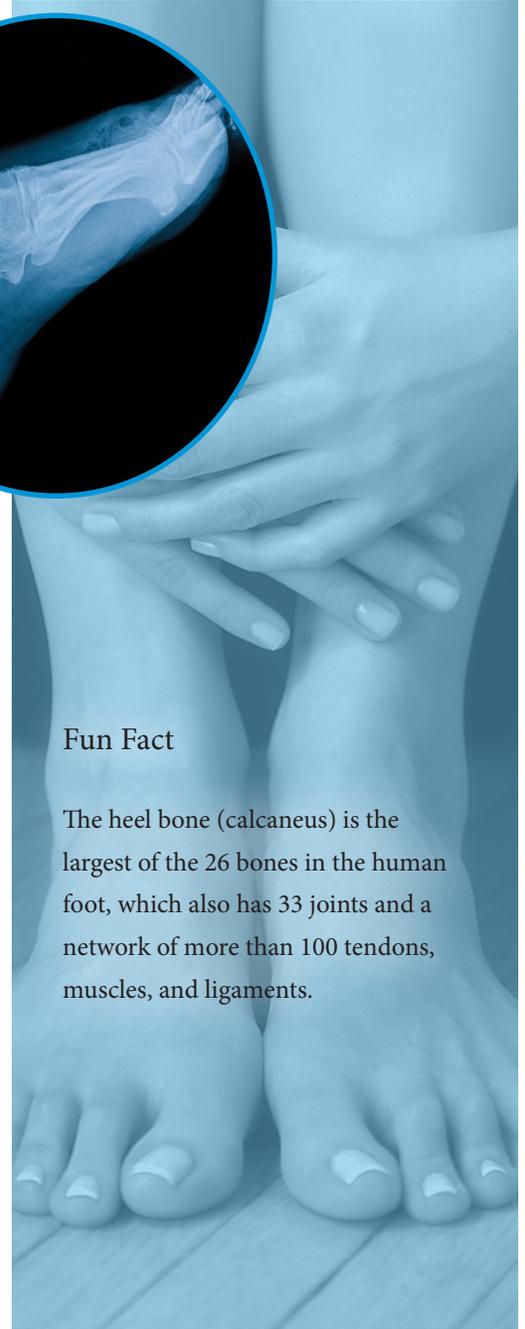
The podiatric physician will examine the area and may perform diagnostic X-rays to rule out bone problems.

Early treatment is key because it may stop symptoms from worsening.



Fun Fact

The heel bone (calcaneus) is the largest of the 26 bones in the human foot, which also has 33 joints and a network of more than 100 tendons, muscles, and ligaments.



The American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) is the nation's leading professional organization for today's podiatrists. Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) are qualified by their education, training, and experience to diagnose and treat conditions affecting the foot, ankle, and structures of the leg. APMA has 53 state component locations across the United States and its territories, with a membership of more than 12,000 podiatrists. All practicing APMA members are licensed by the state in which they practice podiatric medicine. **For more information, visit www.apma.org.**