



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

For medical advice, call your doctor, nurse practitioner or telephone advice nurse. For more information about health or medical subjects, educational programs and community resources, call your Health Education Department.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Difficulty bending your foot at the ankle (pointing or flexing) while sitting or walking.
- Pain or swelling at the back of your heel that does not go away.

NOTE:

Routine foot care is not a covered Health Plan benefit. Foot care is provided for certain members with severe circulation disorders. Talk with your personal physician or nurse if you have any questions.

FOOT CARE



ACHILLES TENDINITIS



The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or if you have further questions, please consult your health care provider.

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ACHILLES TENDINITIS

WHAT IS ACHILLES TENDINITIS?

- Achilles tendinitis is a painful and often swollen achilles tendon. The achilles tendon is a cord-like tendon that connects the calf muscle to the back of the heel bone. Pain and swelling from this condition can last several months.



WHAT CAUSES ACHILLES TENDINITIS?

Achilles tendinitis is caused by small tears in the tendon. These tears occur when the calf muscle is forced to do an activity for which it is too tight or too weak. The tears usually heal without treatment, but they may make future tears more likely.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

To prevent further damage to the achilles tendon and to reduce pain and swelling:

- Rest from high-impact activities such as running, jumping, and heavy lifting. Try low-impact activities, such as swimming or water exercises. Do not do any high-impact activities until the pain is gone.
- Ice with pressure (use an ace bandage), and keep the foot raised for 10-20 minutes every 2 hours, or at least 3 times a day. Be sure that the ice pack fits tightly around all the curves at the back of the heel. Keep the foot raised while you are sitting.
- Be careful when you walk up stairs. Put all of your heel on the step and take one step at a time.
- Get out of bed and chairs slowly. Hold your leg out straight for several seconds (your knee should be locked) and pull your toes toward you as far as possible. Take the first few steps carefully.
- Do not walk barefoot.
- Call your doctor if the pain gets very bad.

WHAT YOUR PODIATRIST CAN DO:

If your pain is very bad, or if you are not able to walk, call your doctor. He or she may recommend:

- Taking medication to reduce pain and swelling.
- Putting inserts in your shoes (called “heel lifts”) so the achilles tendon does not have to stretch as far.
- Using crutches.

Ask your doctor to show you exercises to stretch your calf and make it stronger. This will help prevent achilles tendinitis from happening again. You should do these exercises only after you are pain-free.

REMEMBER: You may be able to prevent future episodes of achilles tendinitis. Talk to your doctor for more information.