

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH



### When Heel Pain Hits the Kids

**M**any adults suffer from heel pain, but the problem is not common in children. When it does strike a young person, it is most often caused by a phenomenon called Sever's disease. Sever's disease is characterized by inflammation of the growth plate near the back of the heel bone. This problem is also called calcaneal apophysitis, which refers to inflammation of the growth plate.

A child's heel grows in a very interesting way. When children are still very young, this area is mostly cartilage with a small amount of bone. Eventually, two areas of bone grow and spread toward each other. By the time the child is in his or her late teens, the two areas should fuse together to form the healthy adult heel. When this area suffers some type of interference, such as a trauma or damage from overuse, Sever's disease can be the result. There may be some relation to exercising on hard surfaces.

Children who suffer from this problem have pain that strikes the side and back of the heel, and sometimes the sole. It is usually most acute when the child is active. Tightness in the calf muscle is common as well. Children who suffer from Sever's disease generally get complete relief from the condition as the bone fills in the area occupied by cartilage. However, treatment is recommended to help relieve pain. This may include heel raises that cushion the foot, reducing the number or intensity of workouts, icing the area, and sometimes orthotics. In extreme cases, casting may be necessary.

Foot and ankle pain should never be ignored, whether it occurs in a child or an adult. Seek out a definitive diagnosis. Then, follow treatment recommendations to relieve pain and ensure healing.



For more information, contact **Pittsburgh Family Foot Care, P.C.** at (724) 941-9440 or visit [www.pffcpc.com](http://www.pffcpc.com).

### Coming this Fall...Special focus on **DIABETES**

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## We Can! Pittsburgh Helps Kids Get Healthy

**C**hildhood obesity is a major health issue in the United States. Over the past 30 years, obesity rates among children have increased significantly to a point where, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), childhood obesity has now become an epidemic.

To address this important issue, the NIH developed We Can!® (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition), a science-based national education program to help children ages 8 to 13 maintain a healthy weight through improved nutrition, increased physical activity, and reduced screen (TV, computer) time. We Can! is unique among existing youth obesity-prevention initiatives in its focus on reaching parents and families as a primary group for influencing young people. This year, We Can! is celebrating "Five Years of Progress" with various activities, including a video contest, We Can! displays on buses and subway stations in select markets, various public service announcements, and information on social media outlets.

We Can! Pittsburgh is a local movement that embraces the philosophy of We Can! by developing programming to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles for the youth of the region.

UPMC Health Plan spearheads the We Can! Pittsburgh initiative with other participating Pittsburgh-area organizations: the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Children's Community Pediatrics, the City of Pittsburgh, H.J. Heinz Company, and the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh (JCC). As a result of this partnership, Pittsburgh was named a We Can! City, the fifth in the nation.

"UPMC Health Plan is committed to keeping families in western Pennsylvania healthy and reducing the prevalence of childhood obesity," says Michael Culyba, M.D., Vice President of Medical Affairs at UPMC Health Plan. "The We Can! Pittsburgh initiative is a great opportunity to create a community awareness of good nutrition, the value of increased physical activity, and decreased screen time."

In the past two years, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh has presented over 75 creative, family-friendly public programs to more than 8,000 program participants. It continues to offer regular We Can!-related activities and has special events planned for this summer and fall. The JCC has offered two sessions of the We Can! Energize Our Families program this year and continually seeks ways to incorporate the We Can! curriculum into its programming. It plans to run another program this fall. HEALTHY Armstrong, a collaborative in Armstrong County, utilizes the We Can! curriculum in the Armstrong School District. After-school programs at the various schools and regular health-focused community events further support this philosophy.

To help increase awareness of the We Can! program, UPMC Health Plan sponsored a two-day We Can! Regional Training event in April. At that time, representatives from interested organizations had an opportunity to learn more about We Can!, receive training from national experts from NIH, and understand the program's many turnkey, flexible resources available for implementing programs in their location. More than 100 individuals registered for this event, representing six states nationwide.

Future plans for We Can! Pittsburgh include supporting partner organizations' We Can!-related activities and events, working closely with We Can! on new program opportunities, exploring Latino-focused programming, and identifying other local organizations that may fit well with We Can! Pittsburgh.



For parent resources, healthy tips, and more helpful information for your family or organization, visit the We Can! Pittsburgh website at [www.upmchealthplan.com/about/wecan.html](http://www.upmchealthplan.com/about/wecan.html).

