Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction

What Is PTTD?

Posterior tibial tendon dysfunction (PTTD) is a condition caused by changes in the tendon, impairing its ability to support the arch. This results in flattening of the foot. PTTD is often called “adult acquired flatfoot” because it is the most common type of flatfoot developed during adulthood.

Causes of PTTD

Tendon overuse is one of the most common causes of PTTD. PTTD-related symptoms usually develop following activities such as stair climbing, hiking, walking, and running.

Possible risk factors for this health problem include:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Elevated blood pressure
- Previous trauma (e.g. certain types of ankle fracture)
- Rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, and other inflammatory conditions
- Steroid injections

Symptoms of PTTD

- pain, typically around the inside of the foot and ankle.
- swelling, warmth, and redness along the inside of the foot and ankle.
- pain that is worse during activity.
- flattening of the arch.
- inward rolling of the ankle.
- turning out of the toes and foot.

As the condition progresses, the symptoms will change.

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Non-surgical Treatment
Because of the progressive nature of PTTD, early treatment is advised. If treated early enough, your symptoms may resolve without the need for surgery and progression of your condition can be arrested.

In contrast, untreated PTTD could leave you with an extremely flat foot, painful arthritis in the foot and ankle, and increasing limitations on walking, running, or other activities.

In many cases of PTTD, treatment can begin with non-surgical approaches that may include:

- **Orthotic devices or bracing.** To give your arch the support it needs, your podiatrist may provide you with an ankle brace or a custom orthotic device that fits into the shoe.
- **Immobilization.** Sometimes a short-leg cast or boot is worn to immobilize the foot and allow the tendon to heal, or you may need to completely avoid all weight-bearing for a while.
- **Physical therapy.** Exercises therapy may help rehabilitate the tendon and muscle following immobilization.
- **Medications.** Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen, help reduce the pain and inflammation.
- **Shoe modifications.** Your podiatrist may advise changes to make with your shoes and may provide special inserts designed to improve arch support.

Practitioner's Notes:

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