

## PLANTAR FASCIITIS : PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

Plantar fasciitis is a cause of pain under your heel. It usually goes in time. Treatment may speed up recovery. Treatments include rest, good footwear, insoles (orthoses), painkillers and stretching exercises. A steroid injection or other treatments may be used in more severe cases.

What is plantar fasciitis? Plantar fasciitis mean inflammation of your plantar fascia. Your plantar fascia is a strong band of tissue (like a ligament) that stretches from your heel to your toes. It supports the arch of your foot and also acts as a shock-absorber in your foot.

What causes plantar fasciitis? Repeated small injuries to the fascia (with or without inflammation) are thought to be the cause of plantar fasciitis. The injury is usually near to where the plantar fascia attaches to your heel bone. You are more likely to injure your plantar fascia in certain situations. For example:

If you are on your feet for a lot of the time e.g. walking, standing, running. If you have recently started exercising on a different surface

If you have been wearing shoes with poor cushioning

If you are overweight – this will put extra strain on your heel

If there is an overuse or stretching of your sole e.g. athletes who increase running intensity or distances

If you have a tight Achilles tendon. This can affect your ability to flex your ankle.

How common is plantar fasciitis? Plantar fasciitis is very common. Around 1 in 10 people will get plantar fasciitis at some time in their life

What are the symptoms of plantar fasciitis? Pain is the main symptom. This can be anywhere on the underside of the heel. However commonly, one spot is found as the main source of pain. This is often about 4 cm forward from your heel, and may be tender to touch.

The pain is often worse when you take your first steps on getting up in the morning, or after long periods of rest where no weight is placed on your foot.

How is plantar fasciitis diagnosed? Your doctor can usually diagnose plantar fasciitis just by talking to you and examining your foot. Your diagnosis may be assisted by a podiatrist, musculoskeletal podiatrist or foot and ankle orthopaedic consultant as well as your doctor if your plantar fasciitis is not settling or if another cause for your pain is suspected. Rarely, tests are needed if diagnosis is uncertain or to rule out other causes of heel pain. This can include X-rays of the heel or an ultrasound scan of the fascia. An ultrasound or MRI shows thickening and swelling of the fascia in plantar fasciitis.

What is the initial treatment for plantar fasciitis? Usually, the pain will ease in time. 'Fascia' tissue, like 'ligament tissue, heal quite slowly. It may take several months and a combination of different treatments.

Treatments include

Plantar Fascia Massage

Insoles to support the plantar fascia from strain

Stretches for the muscles in the lower leg

Footwear

Application of ice

Application of ice

NSAID gel

Corticosteroid injections

Plantar Fascia strapping – please see below for instructions.

#### PLANTAR FASCIA STRAPPING

Start the tape on the outside of the foot just behind the little toe and when you are at the point just behind the heel, pull the tape firmly up towards and finish just behind the big toe. Then applying tape widthways, start just in front of the pad of heel and pull the tape across the arch. Repeat with widths of tape overlapping the first up to just behind the ball of the foot.

2.5 cm micropore (about £1) from most Chemists or Strappal (stronger more durable tape but costs about £4.50) available from Simply feet 0845 370 0380