



# Posterior Tibial Tendon Dysfunction

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## **What's the problem?**

Tendonitis is inflammation of the tendon. Tendonitis can occur as a result of overuse of a tendon. One of the most frequently affected tendons is the posterior tibial tendon. This tendon is normally hard at work, helping to hold the arch up of the foot.

## **How does it feel?**

The symptoms of tendonitis of the posterior tibial tendon include pain in the arch of the foot and swelling along the course of the tendon. Patients may have significant pain when walking, steadily worsening toward the end of the day. Over time patients may relate that their "arches have fallen". Fallen arches occur when the posterior tibial tendon is no longer functioning properly.

## **How is it diagnosed?**

Your podiatrist will do a physical exam and test the tendons function and strength level. He may then need to send you for an MRI to see the tendon and assess it for tears or even a rupture.

## **What will my doctor do for it?**

Your podiatrist will perform a physical exam to inspect the integrity of the tendon. She may order tests such as an x-ray to rule out fractures if there was a recent injury. If your doctor suspects severe damage or needs to see the extent of the damage he may order an MRI to visualize the tendon.

Treatment options vary depending on the severity of the tendon damage. You may start cast immobilization for 4-6 weeks. After the acute period, your doctor may fit you with a custom orthosis or brace. An air stirrup brace or lace-

up ankle support is beneficial during the rehabilitation period. Your doctor may prescribe special shoes with external additions to the medial side (i.e., medial heel wedge), to support the foot and prevent arch collapse. The doctor may prescribe a custom foot orthotic based on the flexibility of the foot. If the condition becomes severe and chronic, the doctor may suggest surgery which consists of tendon transfers, osteotomies or fusions to improve function and decrease symptoms.

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