

Cavus Foot (High-Arched Foot)

What is Cavus Foot?

Cavus foot is a condition in which the foot has a very high arch. Because of this high arch, an excessive amount of weight is placed on the ball and heel of the foot when walking or standing. Cavus foot can lead to a variety of signs and symptoms, such as pain and instability. It can develop at any age, and can occur in one or both feet.

Causes

Cavus foot is often caused by a neurologic disorder or other medical condition such as cerebral palsy, Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, spina bifida, polio, muscular dystrophy, or stroke. In other cases of cavus foot, the high arch may represent an inherited structural abnormality.

An accurate diagnosis is important because the underlying cause of cavus foot largely determines its future course. If the high arch is due to a neurologic disorder or other medical condition, it is likely to progressively worsen. On the other hand, cases of cavus foot that do not result from neurologic disorders usually do not change in appearance.

Symptoms

The arch of a cavus foot will appear high even when standing. In addition, one or more of the following symptoms may be present:

- Hammertoes (bent toes) or claw toes (toes clenched like a fist)
- Calluses on the ball, side, or heel of the foot
- Pain when standing or walking
- An unstable foot due to the heel tilting inward, which can lead to ankle sprains

Some people with cavus foot may also experience foot drop, a weakness of the muscles in the foot and ankle that results in dragging the foot when taking a step. Foot drop is usually a sign of an underlying neurologic condition.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of cavus foot includes a review of the patient's family history. The foot and ankle surgeon examines the foot, looking for a high arch and possible calluses, hammertoes, and claw toes. The foot is tested for muscle strength, and the patient's walking pattern and coordination are observed. If a neurologic condition appears to be present, the entire limb may be examined. The surgeon may also study the pattern of wear on the patient's shoes.

X-rays are sometimes ordered to further assess the condition. In addition, the surgeon may refer the patient to a neurologist for a complete neurologic evaluation.

Call to schedule your appointment today.

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