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Baseball season is here!

Baseball cleats and foot conditions

As a podiatrist, I see a lot of common foot conditions that are associated with playing baseball as an adolescent. Some of the most common injuries we encounter in young athletes include calcaneal apophysitis and plantar fasciitis. One of the biggest concerns with cleats is their lack of substantial support to the foot and ankle. This article is not meant to recommend a specific brand of cleats, but rather discuss the characteristics to look for when purchasing new cleats this season, and to bring awareness to some of the more common foot conditions that arise in young baseball players.

In our practice, calcaneal apophysitis and plantar fasciitis are commonly seen in young adults. Some of the risk factors include improper shoes, obesity, and hereditary foot structure. Patients usually complain of pain on the bottom or back of their heels. Calcaneal apophysitis is related to pain along the growth plate of the heel bone, while plantar fasciitis involves inflammation of a band of tissue that extends the entire length of the arch of the foot. Both conditions are usually resolved with custom orthotics, stretching, icing, and anti-inflammatories. The lack of adequate support in most cleats also contributes to this condition. My practice specializes in treating these patients with appropriate custom made orthotics which allow these athletes to resolve their symptoms as quickly as possible.

“What are the best type of cleats to wear?” The debate continues with coaches and players as to whether rubber or metal cleats are better. Some major leaguers prefer metal over plastic because of the amount of traction and “dig in” sensation that they get when they wear them. The players that prefer rubber report that they provide more support and cushion on their feet and that they don’t “dig in” as much so they believe they are less likely to have a lower extremity injury.

It is up to each individual player to decide what feels most comfortable to them, but an ideal cleat would have good traction, provide stability around the ankle, and provide enough support and cushion throughout the bottom of the foot. Remember, when you get ready to take the field this spring, try on multiple pairs of cleats to see which feel the best.

If you sustain an injury, see a podiatrist at the first sign of pain to find a solution to keep you out on the field! To learn more about foot health, visit [Community Podiatry](#).