Plantar Fasciitis/heel pain

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

What are the causes?
Repeated small injuries to the fascia are thought to be the cause of plantar fasciitis. The injury is usually near to where the plantar fascia attaches to your heel bone.

Symptoms of plantar fasciitis
This condition starts with pain located at the tip of the heel, usually on the inner side. The pain is normally worse after rest, when you stand and take a few steps, then settles as you continue to walk. Most often, the pain is worst first thing in the morning.

You are most like to suffer from plantar fasciitis if:
- you are overweight
- you have a job that involves a lot of walking, or standing on hard surfaces
- you have tight calf muscles that limit how far you can bend your ankles
- your feet are very flat or have high arches
- you wear shoes that are not supportive
- you have weakness in your ankle, knee or hip

How is it treated?

Pain relief
Apply an ice pack to the plantar fascia over a layer of damp towel for 10 minutes, twice a day.
Massaging the painful areas gently with your fingers may give pain relief.

Footwear
Avoid wearing flat soled shoes.
Wear shoes that that provide good support to the arches of your feet but also cushion your heels.
Rest
Rest the affected area when possible; avoid standing for long periods or walking long distances. However it is also important to exercise your feet and calves regularly.

Exercises
Leg and foot stretches may be used to help your problem.

Steroid injections
A steroid (cortisone) injection is sometimes tried if your pain remains bad despite the above measures. It may relieve the pain in some people for several weeks but does not always cure the problem.

Physiotherapy
You may benefit from a physiotherapy assessment if the advice given in this leaflet has not changed your symptoms.

For further information go to the following NHS website.

http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heel-pain/Pages/Introduction.aspx