What Parents Should Know

About Flatfeet, Intoeing, Bent Legs and Shoes for Children

**Flatfeet**

Parents worry about flatfoot, but...flatfoot are normal in infants, children and adults. Special shoes, inserts, wedges, or exercises do not create an arch in a child with a flexible flatfoot.

**Did You Know?**

One in five children never develops an arch. Most adults with flexible flatfoot have strong, painless feet.

Most children have low arches because they are loose-jointed. The arch flattens when they are standing and their feet seem to be rolled in and their foot pointed outward.

The arch can be seen when these feet are hanging free, or when the child stands on her toes.

**Flatfeet**

Just as normal children are of different heights...

...normal arches have different heights, too!

**Did You Know?**

Wearing a pad or insert under the arch of a simple flexible flatfoot can make the child less comfortable...and it's a waste of money!

The Physician is concerned if the flatfoot is:

- stiff
- painful
- or very severe

But the Physician is most concerned about a high arch because it is most likely to cause pain later.

**Shoes**

Barefoot people have the best feet! Your child needs a flexible, soft shoe that allows maximum freedom to develop normally.

**Size**

Shoes are much better a little large than too small.

**Flexibility**

Stiff, supportive shoes are not good for feet, because they limit movement which is needed for developing strength and retaining foot mobility.

A child's foot needs protection from cold and sharp objects, but also needs freedom of movement.

Avoid odd shapes

A material that breathes for warm climates.

Avoid odd shapes

**Intoeing**

Intoeing is common in childhood and is usually outgrown.

**Tibial Torsion**

Tibial Torsion is an inward twist of the lower leg. It is a variation of normal that is very common during infancy and childhood.

Splints, exercises, braces, or shoe modifications do not correct the twist and may, in fact, be harmful. Most legs with tibial torsion straighten without treatment during infancy and childhood.

**Femoral Torsion**

Femoral torsion is a twisting of the thigh bone causing an inward rotation of the leg. The cause of femoral torsion is unknown. Femoral torsion is most severe when the child is about five or six years old. Most children outgrow this condition by age 10 years. Shoe inserts or modifications or braces do not correct this condition. They may make the child uncomfortable, self-conscious and hamper play.

**Did You Know?**

During normal development, infants often have bowlegs. With growth the child may then become knock kneed by about 18 months of age. With further growth the legs become straighter.

Your doctor will decide if your child's legs are normal. If normal, the condition will correct with time.

**Intoeing**

Intoeing is common in childhood and is usually outgrown.

There are three causes of intoeing that your doctor can determine:

1. Hooked foot
2. Tibial torsion
3. Femoral torsion

**Hooked Foot**

Hooked foot is caused by the position of the baby before birth. Most hooked feet get better without treatment during the baby's first months, though improvement may be seen during the first three years.

Recently, the hooked foot is stiff, persists, and may require treatment with a cast or splint. Special shoes do not correct this condition.

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**Summary**

Most variations of normal are outgrown.

Your doctor will make some things go well for your child

Remember...

The best thing you can do for your child is to encourage physical activity and avoid over-eating.

Remember that so called corrective shoes, inserts, wedges or braces are ineffective and only make your child unhappy.

Let the magic of time and growth correct the problem. Mother Nature's treatment is safe, inexpensive and effective.

"Play is the occupation of the child"