



## DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD'S FEET & LEGS

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# YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Between birth and your child's first steps the bones and muscles in their feet and legs are undergoing important developmental changes.

It is normal for development to vary from child to child. No two children develop in the same way.

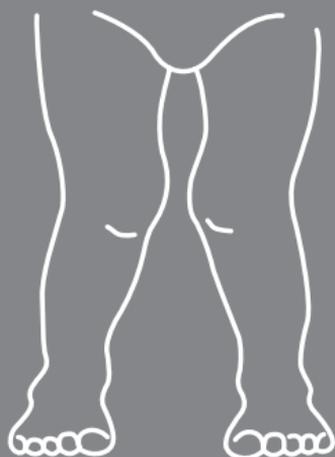
Here are some normal developmental changes:



## **BOW LEGS**

- Bow legs are a common finding at birth and part of normal development involving the thigh and lower leg.
- In children of walking age it is usually associated with a pigeon toed walking style and low arched feet.
- This usually becomes less obvious by the age of 2 years.

# YOUR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT



## **KNOCK KNEES**

- Knock knees are a normal part of growth of the lower limbs and they should be of little concern unless they appear excessive or continue past the age of 7.
- Knock knees usually become apparent after the age of 2 years and reach a maximum angle at 4 years of age.
- After this period, the knock knees reduce leaving the legs with fairly straight appearance by the age of 6-7 years.



## **LOW ARCHED / FLAT FEET**

- A baby's feet will appear fat and flattened when they first stand.
- A low arched foot is a common finding with children's feet, this is their normal developmental position, which you may find changes with time.
- All children's feet develop differently, some will be low arched, while others may have a moderate or high arch.

# SITTING POSITIONS

Bones and joints in children are constantly growing and are not fully developed until adulthood. They are also flexible and can be twisted and distorted without your child feeling pain. Incorrect movement can cause soft bones to develop abnormally with potential for lifelong problems.



**INCORRECT POSITION**

- The reverse 'W' position or frog position, is an incorrect sitting position as it puts undue stress on the joints.
- It also exaggerates and encourages pigeon toed walking and knock-knees.
- This position should be discouraged.



**CORRECT POSITION**

- Children should be encouraged to sit cross-legged or with legs straight out in front of them.



## CHILDREN'S FOOTWEAR

Foot problems may be a result of injury, deformity, illness or inherited factors. Inappropriate footwear can aggravate these pre-existing conditions, or even cause new problems.

### POORLY FITTING SHOES

It is a concerning fact that many children by their teens may suffer foot problems, associated with ill fitting shoes.

#### Signs of poorly fitting shoes include:

- Blisters
- Abrasions
- Corns/calluses
- Ingrown toenails

### THE ROLE OF SHOES

Footwear is required for protection.

**Shoes should protect the feet from the following but still allowing freedom and mobility:**

- Injury
- Cold
- Infection
- Heat

Shoes which fit poorly because they are too narrow, too short, too big or inappropriate, can cause discomfort, injury and even permanent injury.

### WHEN TO START WEARING SHOES

Children don't need shoes until they begin walking usually at about 12-15 months of age. Before this period socks or booties are appropriate, to protect their feet.



## PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

**A check-up with Podiatry Services SA  
is recommended if:**

- You notice uneven shoe wear
- You notice any skin rashes, hard skin lumps or bumps on your child's feet
- Your child complains of recurrent pain in the feet and/or legs
- Your child is constantly tripping or falling