If your child is diagnosed with Blount’s disease, our Orthopaedics and Strong4Life programs will work together to make sure he receives the care he needs. Experts from both programs can help treat the disorder while promoting a healthier lifestyle.

**What is Blount’s disease?**
Blount’s disease is a growth disorder of the shin bone (tibia) in which the lower leg just below the knee turns inward. It can occur in toddlers or adolescents and resembles a bowleg. But unlike bowlegs in childhood, Blount’s disease slowly gets worse as the child grows. It can cause severe bowing of one or both legs.

Blount’s disease affects toddlers and adolescents differently. The toddler form, known as infantile Blount’s, typically affects both knees. It can lead to more severe problems if left untreated. The adolescent form commonly affects one leg more than the other, but both are affected in some cases. The bowing of the leg can be quite noticeable but typically does not get as severe as infantile Blount’s.

There is no genetic link to Blount’s disease and the cause is unknown. The effect of extra weight on the growth plates of the leg is likely a contributing factor. In fact, the condition is often associated with being overweight.

**What are the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment?**

**Symptoms**
The most obvious symptom of Blount’s disease is one or both of the lower legs turning inward at the knee. This is most evident when the child stands or walks with an awkward gait.

The bowing of the legs may:
- Look the same on both legs.
- Start just below the knee.
- Rapidly get worse.

If left untreated, Blount’s disease can cause severe knee pain and early arthritis because of the abnormal stress on the joints.

**Diagnosis**
A thorough physical examination by a pediatric-trained doctor is the first step in diagnosing Blount’s disease. The physician will use an X-ray of the lower leg to confirm the diagnosis and make sure that it is not rickets, a bone disease that also causes bowing.
Treatment
For children under the age of 3, bracing can be used to treat Blount’s disease. If bracing fails or the bowing of the legs is not caught until after age 3, surgery is usually required. Surgery to treat Blount’s disease may involve cutting the shin bone so it can be placed in the right position and lengthened if necessary.

In some cases, surgery can be used to stop the growth of the outer half of the shin bone. This can allow a child’s natural growth to reverse the bowing process. This kind of surgery is much simpler and works best on children with less severe symptoms who still have a lot of growing to do.

If the affected leg can be placed in the right position, the outlook for a complete recovery from Blount’s disease is good.

We can help
We have a special program for children whose Blount's disease is related to obesity or excess weight. The Children's Strong4Life Clinic, part of the Strong4Life wellness movement, is dedicated to treating children who are overweight. Your doctor may recommend that your child becomes involved with Strong4Life. Patients can be seen in a clinic setting by a multidisciplinary team that includes:
- Doctors
- Physician assistants
- Dietitians
- Psychologists
- Exercise physiologists

The team will work with your child and your family to develop personalized physical activity, nutrition and behavior plans. The goal of these plans is to treat children who are overweight and promote a healthier lifestyle.

If necessary, our team will work with orthopaedic doctors to treat your child. Our Orthopaedics Program provides specialized care for children that need surgical and medical treatment for a variety of injuries, disorders and conditions.

Visit choa.org/strong4lifeclinic or call 404-785-1535 for more information on our Strong4Life Clinic.

Visit choa.org/orthopaedics for more information on our Orthopaedics Program.

Some physicians and affiliated healthcare professionals on the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta team are independent providers and are not our employees.

Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta launched Strong4Life, a wellness movement designed to ignite societal change and reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity and its associated diseases in Georgia. Strong4Life reaches families through public awareness, policy change efforts, school programs, healthcare provider programs, community partnerships and more. For more information, visit Strong4Life.com.