



Intoeing (Pigeon-toed)

Patient and Family Education

What is intoeing?

Intoeing is sometimes called pigeon-toed. It means that your child's feet turn in when he walks.

- Intoeing usually does not cause pain
- It will not stop your baby from learning to walk
- It has not been found to cause arthritis in adults.

What types of intoeing can occur?

Intoeing can develop from three areas: the foot, the knee, or at the hip.

1. The Foot (Metatarsus Adductus)
 - Metatarsus adductus is an inward curve of the outer border of the foot or a kidney-shaped foot
 - It is usually first noticed when your baby is an infant.
 - This is the most common type of intoeing in children from birth to 2 years of age
2. The Knee (Tibial Torsion)
 - Tibial torsion is an inward twist of the tibia (shin) bone.
 - It is usually seen when your baby begins to walk.
 - In most children, the inward twist slowly corrects itself without treatment between the ages of 4 to 6 years of age.
3. The Hip (Femoral Anteversion)
 - Femoral anteversion is an inward twist of the upper thighbone at the hip.
 - You may notice your child walking with their knee caps pointing inward.
 - This is usually noticed between ages 2 to 4. It occurs more in girls than boys.
 - Most cases correct themselves without treatment by the time your child is between 6 and 8 years old.

What is the treatment for intoeing?

Your child's doctor will talk with you about specific treatment for your child. Some general guidelines are listed here:

- Observation
- Regular check-ups with your child's doctor are usually the best treatment for intoeing. Your doctor can watch your child's legs and feet over time. No specific treatment has been proven to improve a child's intoeing.
- Many parents worry that their child will always walk with their feet turned in, however this hardly ever happens.
- Most cases cannot be fixed with special braces or casts.
 - These were used in the past, but it has been found that the bones usually correct themselves.
 - In most children, intoeing will go away without any treatment. The usual bone growth in the legs leads to correction in most children by age 6 to 8 years of age.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.

Intoeing, continued

- Falling and tripping are part of normal development when children are learning to walk and run. Intoeing is not usually a reason for such things.
- Intoeing should not affect your child's ability to walk, run, play, or lead a normal life.

When should I call my child's doctor?

Call your child's doctor if:

- You think your child's intoeing is getting worse.
- Your child continues to have intoeing after the age of 8 years.
- You have any questions about how your child looks or feels.

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