

What is clubfoot?

- Babies are sometimes born with clubfoot.
- Clubfoot is a deformity that causes the foot to be turned so that the:
 - Foot points downward and toes turn inward.
 - Bottom of the foot is twisted inward.
- Sometimes the clubfoot can be seen before the baby is born using ultrasound.
- The cause of clubfoot is not known.



What is the Ponseti method?

The Ponseti method is a way to treat clubfoot. This treatment:

- Is a mostly non-surgical way to correct clubfoot.
- Works best if started in the first few weeks of life.
- Works well when you follow cast changes and bracing.
- Takes several months to complete.

What can I expect?

1. Treatment phase

- Treatment should start when your baby is less than 1 week old.
- It involves gentle manipulation (movements) and casting of the affected foot. The cast helps hold the foot in the right position.
- Most often, it is done every week for 5 to 6 weeks.
- The foot will slowly start to re-shape to the right position.
- Most often, it takes 5 or 6 casts to fully correct the foot.
- Your baby may need minor surgery called a tenotomy when the last cast is put on.
 - This is the last step to correct the clubfoot.
 - It is an outpatient surgery. This means your baby should not need to stay in the hospital.
 - Talk with the doctor to learn more.

2. Maintenance and prevention

- Your baby will start wearing a brace after the last cast is removed.
- The brace:
 - Has shoes mounted on a bar.
 - Helps keep the foot in the right position.

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

Clubfoot, continued

- Your baby will:
 - Wear the brace 23 hours a day until they are pulling to stand and walking.
 - Only wear the brace at night and during naps after they start standing and walking.
- **If your baby does not wear the brace as advised by the doctor:**
 - The clubfoot deformity will most likely return.
 - Your child may need more surgery to correct it.



What are the risks if clubfoot is not corrected?

If not corrected, clubfoot can happen again. This can:

- Lead to more surgery or casting.
- Cause lifelong foot pain and result in foot deformity.

What should I check for when my baby is wearing the brace?

- Check your baby's:
 - Skin for blisters or redness.
 - Heels and ankles for any signs that the brace or shoes do not fit well.
- Call the doctor if any of these things happen.

What are tips for wearing the brace?

- Play with your baby like normal while they are wearing the brace.
- Make wearing the brace a part of your routine each day.
- Never use lotions or powders on blisters or red areas.

What should I do if the brace seems too loose or tight?

- Try to tighten or loosen the harness 1 hole at a time.
- Have your baby wear thinner socks.
- Use 40-inch round shoe laces.
- Make sure you put the shoe on the right way. Your baby's heel should touch the back and bottom of the shoe.
- **Call the doctor or Orthotics department if none of these things work.**

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Clubfoot, continued

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor **right away** if your baby has any of these problems:

- Swelling that does not get better with raising the casted foot
- Swelling of the toes that does not “pink up” after 20 minutes of raising them higher than the level of the heart
- Decreased or loss of movement in the toes
- Change in skin color below the cast
- Red, irritated skin or sores
- Bad smell from inside the cast
- Bright red drainage on the cast
- Fever over 100.5°F for longer than 24 hours with no other symptoms
- Crack in the cast or peeling of the cast
- Wet cast that does not dry all the way
- Something stuck in the cast

Also call your baby’s doctor if you:

- Think the brace does not fit well.
- Think your baby’s shoes are too loose or tight.
- See skin redness or irritation that does not go away in 1 to 2 days.
- Have questions or concerns.

What follow-up care does my baby need?

The doctor will talk with you about specific care for your baby. Some guidelines are listed below.

Baby’s age	Clinic visits	Treatment
Birth to about 2 months old	Every 1 to 2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gentle manipulation of the foot• Cast changes
About 2 months old	Outpatient surgery visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achilles tendon lengthening (tenotomy)• Put on last cast
About 3 months old	Remove last cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure for brace
About 4 months old until baby is pulling and standing	Clinic visit every 2 to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must wear brace 23 hours a day, no exceptions
About 12 months old until 3 to 4 years old	Clinic visit every 3 to 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear brace at night and during naps

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child’s doctor or a member of your child’s healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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