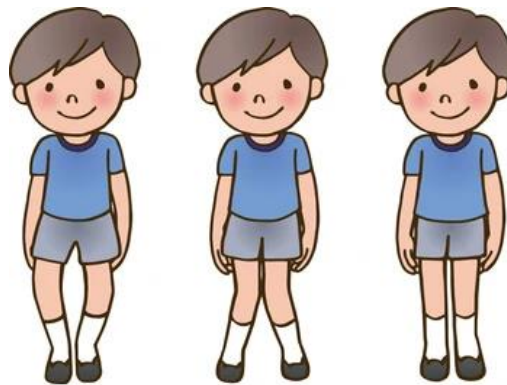


# Bow legs and knock knees in children



## What are bow legs?

When a baby or toddler lies or stands with their feet together, there will be a gap between their knees. In some children, this gap might be wider than others. It is most obvious from birth to 18 months, but can sometimes be seen up until 4 years of age.

Bow legs (genu varum)



## Why does my child have bow legs?

It is normal for infants to be born with bow legs, it is related to how the soft and flexible bones grow when the baby is still in the womb and in the foetal position.

Bow legs do not usually cause children any problems or pain. The bend in their legs sometimes causes the child to walk with their feet pointing inwards.

## Treatment for bow legs

For most children, the bowing corrects itself as they grow and develop. Treatment is not needed therefore special shoes, braces or exercises are not recommended.

If you are concerned about whether the bowing is getting better, you could take photographs of your child's legs every 6 months to keep a record of their change.

## What are knock knees?

When a child with knock knees stands with their knees together, there will be a gap in between their ankles which is larger than expected. A small distance between the ankles is normal, but this gap can be up to 8cm or more in children with knock knees.



Knock knees (genu valgum)

## Why does my child have knock knees?

Many young children have knock knees and it is almost always just a normal part of their development and growth. Their legs will normally straighten out by the ages of 6 or 7.

Knock knees do not usually cause children any problems or pain. You may feel your child looks awkward when they walk or does not run as well as their friends. In some cases, children may walk on the inside border of their feet or complain about their feet or legs aching.

## Treatment for knock knees

As knock knees almost always correct themselves on their own as your child grows, treatment is not needed therefore special shoes, braces or exercises are not recommended.

Bow legs and knock knees are a normal part of a child's growth.

### What can I do to help?

Maintaining a healthy weight is very important. Being overweight places greater stresses and strains on your bones and joints.

Bring physically active such as going for walks, going to the park, riding a bike or scooter or going swimming helps to strengthen the muscles and develop healthy bones.

### When should I see the doctor?

- If only one leg is affected or one leg is worse than the other
- Your child appears to be in pain or has pain at night
- Your child presents with a limp that does not improve after a short period
- Your child has persistent swelling in any of their joints or fever, redness or heat
- Your child is unusually short for their age

#### Bow legs

- If the distance between their knees when their feet are together measures more than 5cm when they are led down
- Bow legs persist after age three

#### Knock knees

- The gap between the ankles is greater than 8cm when standing with their knees together
- A child under the age of 2 or over the age of 8 has knock knees

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