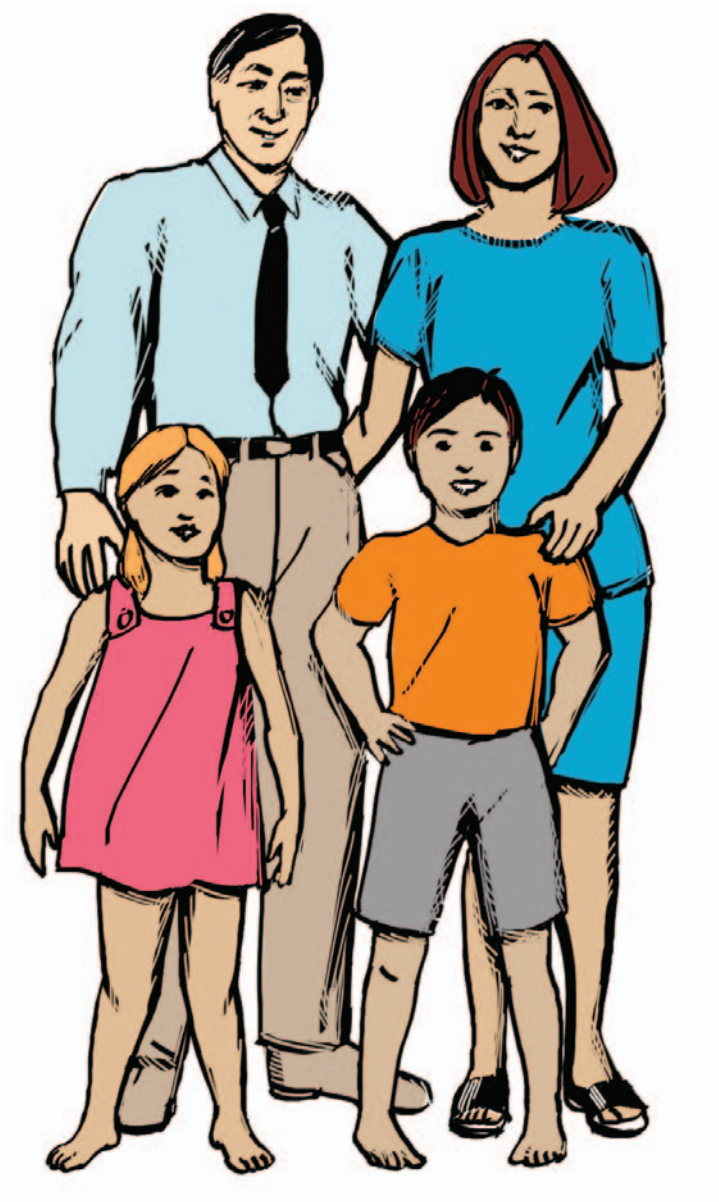


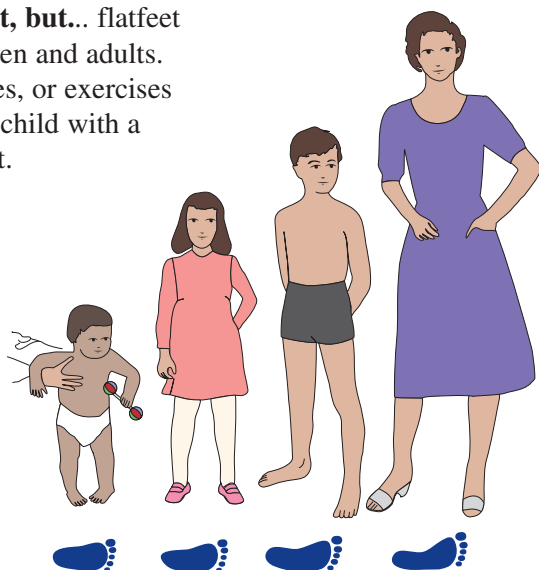
What Parents Should Know About Flatfeet, Intoeing, Bent Legs and Shoes for Children



Lynn T. Staheli, MD

Flatfeet

Parents worry about flatfeet, but... flatfeet are normal in infants, children and adults. Special shoes, inserts, wedges, or exercises do not create an arch in a child with a flexible flatfoot.

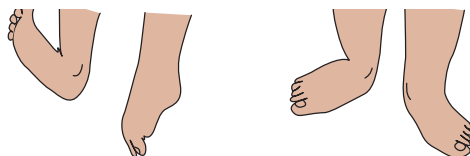


Did You Know?

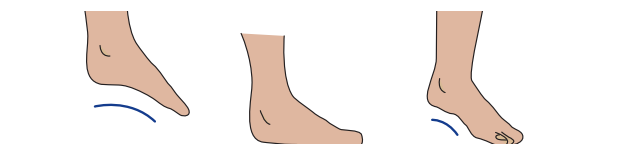
One in five children never develops an arch. Most adults with flexible flatfeet have strong, pain free feet.



Most children have low arches because they are loose-jointed. The arch flattens when they are standing and their feet seem to be rolled in and their feet pointed outward.

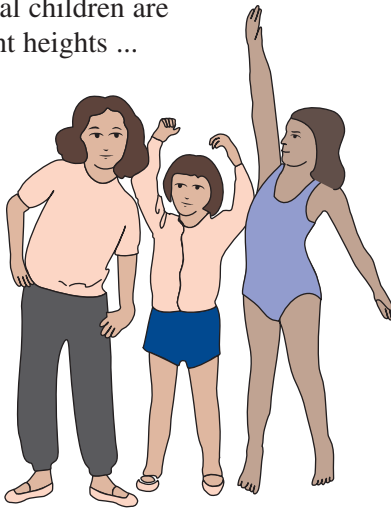


The arch can be seen when these feet are hanging free or when the child stands on her toes.



Flatfeet

Just as normal children are
of different heights ...



...normal arches have
different heights, too!

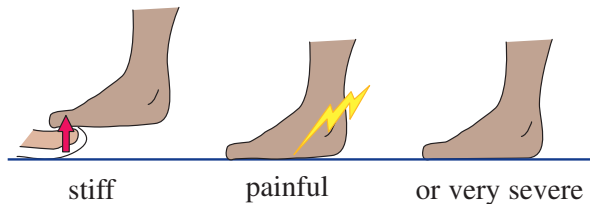


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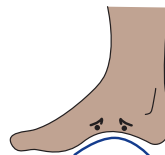
Wearing a pad or insert under the arch of a
simple flexible flatfoot can make the child less
comfortable...and it's a waste of money!



The physician
is concerned if
the flatfoot is:



But the physician is most concerned
about a high arch because it is most
likely to cause pain later.

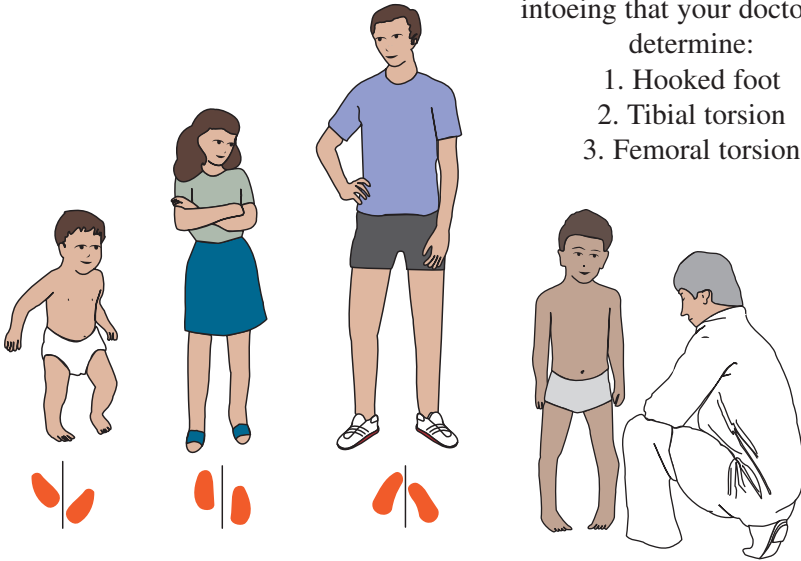


Intoeing

Intoeing is common in childhood and is usually outgrown.

There are three causes of intoeing that your doctor can determine:

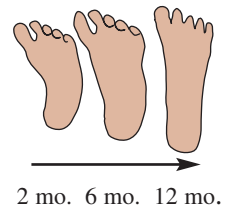
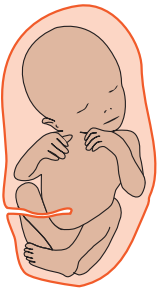
1. Hooked foot
2. Tibial torsion
3. Femoral torsion



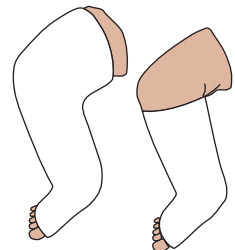
Hooked Foot

Hooked foot is caused by the position of the baby before birth.

Most hooked feet get better without treatment during the baby's first months, though improvement may be seen throughout the first three years.



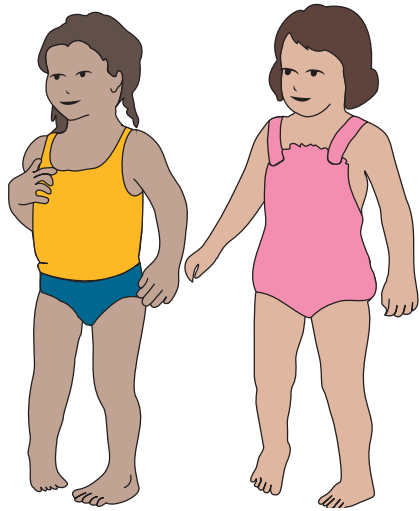
Rarely, the hooked foot is stiff, persists, and may require treatment with a cast or splint. Special shoes do not correct this condition.



Tibial Torsion

Tibial Torsion is an inward twist of the lower leg. It is a variation of normal that is very common during infancy and childhood.

Splints, exercises, braces, or shoe modifications do not correct the twist and may, in fact, be harmful. Most legs with tibial torsion straighten without treatment during infancy and childhood.

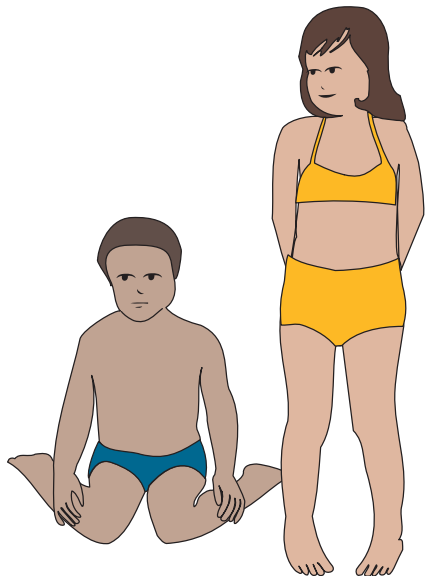


Femoral Torsion

Femoral torsion is a twisting of the thigh bone causing an inward rotation of the leg. The cause of femoral torsion is unknown.

Femoral torsion is most severe when the child is about five or six years old. Most children outgrow this condition by age 10 years.

Shoe inserts, modifications or braces do not correct this condition. They may make the child uncomfortable, self-conscious and hamper play.

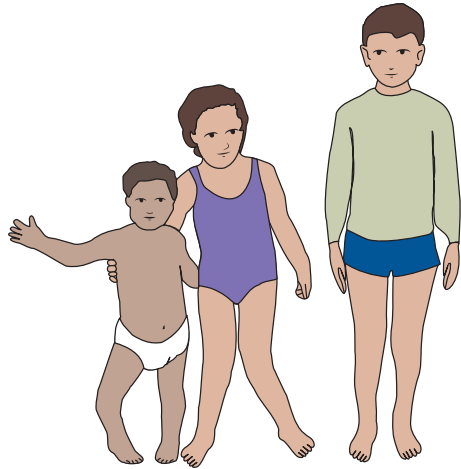


Bowlegs and Knock Knees

During their normal development, infants often have bowlegs. With growth the child may then become knock kneed by about 18 months of age. With further growth the legs become straight.

Your doctor will decide if your child's legs are normal. If normal, the condition will correct with time.

Special shoes, wedges, inserts or exercises only make the child feel bad and do not correct the shape.



Your doctor may be concerned if the condition is severe, occurs only on one side or runs in the family - especially if the family tends to be unusually short in stature.

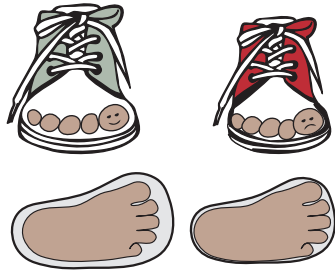


Shoes

Barefoot people have the best feet! Your child needs a flexible, soft shoe that allows maximum freedom for the foot to develop normally.

Size

Shoes are much better a little large than too small.

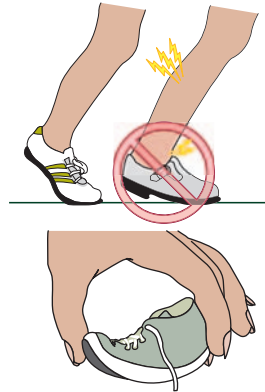


Flexibility

Stiff, “supportive shoes” are not good for feet, because they limit movement which is needed for developing strength and retaining foot mobility.

A child's foot needs protection from cold and sharp objects and freedom for movement.

Children's falls cause many injuries. A flat sole that is neither slippery or sticky is best.



Material

A material that breathes may be best, especially for warm climates.



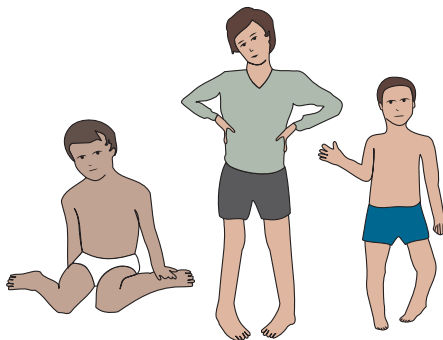
Avoid odd shapes



Pointed toes, elevated heels and stiff soles are bad for the foot.

Summary

Most variations of normal are outgrown. Your doctor will make sure things go well for your child

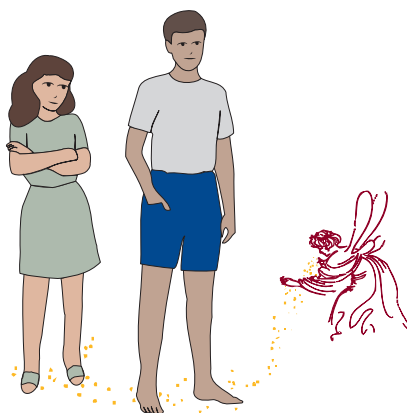


Remember....

The best thing you can do for your child is to encourage physical activity and avoid over-eating.

Remember that so called corrective shoes, inserts, wedges or braces are ineffective and only make your child unhappy.

Let the magic of time and growth correct the problem. Mother Nature's treatment is safe, inexpensive and effective.



“Play is the occupation of the child”

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