

What if your child's feet turn in a little?

After your child began to walk, you may have noticed that his or her feet turned in (called **in toe-ing** or pigeon toes). Many children toe in, but most outgrow it by the time they enter school. Learning more about toeing in may help put your mind at ease. Consider this too: When you look at the adults around you, very few toe in. Your child will also likely outgrow it.

Turning in from the Foot:

Your child's feet may toe in from the middle of one or both feet and may be shaped like kidney beans (**metatarsus varus** or **adductus**). The position of your child's feet is probably due to the curled-up position before birth. The doctor will inspect your child's legs and feet to determine how severe the toeing in is.

Turning in from the Knees:

One or both of your child's feet may toe in from the knee (**internal tibial torsion**). This type of toeing in may be caused by the position before birth and prolonged if the child sleeps curled-up. The doctor may determine whether your child will outgrow toeing in or need help.

Turning in from above the Knee:

Your child's feet may toe in (**femoral anteversion**) from the thigh or hip, which may be caused by the position before birth. The way your child sits may keep the hip joint turned in, slowing full correction. The doctor will inspect your child's hips and may have your child walk to assess his or her feet in motion.

Turning out from above the Knee:

Your child's feet may toe out from the hips, thighs, or knees (**retroversion**). This was likely caused by the position before birth and aggravated by your child's sitting or sleeping with hips pointed outward. The doctor may examine your child when lying down and while walking to assess foot position.

Understanding Arch Development

Although many children's feet have arches when their feet are off the ground, they may have **flat feet** when standing. This is due to loose arch-supporting ligaments in the feet. The doctor inspects your child's arches when they're in the air and on a flat surface. If your child has **painful flat feet**, the doctor may order x-rays to determine the best type of treatment.

If Your Child's Legs Aren't Straight

If your child's legs curve outward, he or she has **bowlegs**. If your child's knees come together and the lower legs point outward, he or she has **knock-knees**. Often, a child will start out with bowlegs, the legs may straighten, then the child may become knock-kneed. The doctor will examine your child's legs and may x-ray them to make sure there isn't a structural problem.