



**A guide to
feet, shoes and
common leg problems**

It is best to leave shoes off indoors and allow feet to be 'free'.

It is best to have children's feet measured by a qualified fitter even if shoes are then purchased from other shops.

Children under 4 should have their feet measured.

Shoes need to be wide enough for the toes to be flat and 1 cm (a bit less than 1/2 inch) beyond the longest toe.

Shoes with laces, velcro and buckles are good to hold the heel in place and stop the toes moving forward.

If the heel of the shoes slips off when a child goes on tiptoe, it is too big.

If possible shoes made of natural materials are best for feet e.g. canvas, cotton, leather, so that feet can breathe.

The question:- 'Do they feel comfortable' cannot be relied on because children's bones are soft. Children will not necessarily know if their shoes are cramping their feet.

Second hand shoes or hand me down shoes will have the shape of the previous owner's feet.

Cotton socks are best and it is important that they are the right size too.

Common foot problems

Bow legs, knock kneed, feet apart, toes turned in or out and walking with a waddle are all common when children start to walk, - and most minor foot problems sort themselves out however... If there is any worry or asymmetry, then talk to the Health Visitor or GP.

Bow legs is where the gap between the knees is pronounced when the feet are together. It usually improves or corrects itself, but if concerned check with the GP.

Knock Knees is when the knees touch and there is a pronounced gap between the ankles. It usually improves or corrects itself, but if concerned, check with the GP.

In-toeing (also known as pidgeon toes) where the feet turn usually improves or corrects itself over time, treatment usually not needed. If concerned, speak to the GP.

Out-toeing where feet turn out usually improves or corrects itself and treatment usually not needed. If concerned, speak to the GP.

Flat feet are common in young children and normally no treatment is needed. If feet are rolling inwards this again may need no treatment, but if pronounced or you are concerned check with the GP.

Tiptoe walking if child walks on tiptoe, talk to the GP. This may require treatment if persistent.

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