Common Orthopaedic Conditions

In-toeing, Knock Knees and Bowlegs

Information for Parents
Paediatric Physiotherapy department
Children develop and reach their milestones at different times and in some cases their walking can appear unusual. This is completely normal and in most cases no treatment is required.

**Bowlegs**

Bowleg (Genu Varum) is a term used to describe outward curving of the leg that occurs in almost all children. If a child’s ankles are placed together then there is a gap seen between the knees. Children are born bowlegged and as they begin to stand and walk the legs begin to straighten out on their own from about 18 months onward. They require no physiotherapy intervention. Only very occasionally do some severe cases require to be referred to an orthopaedic consultant.
Knock Knees

Knock Knees (Genu Valgum) describes the position when the knees come together and the lower legs angle outwards. It can be seen one or both legs. It is most evident around the ages of 3 or 4 and may persist for a few years before it begins to improve. This is a normal stage of growth.

Children do not usually require treatment but occasionally may require further investigation if there are other concerns.

In-toeing

Often children walk with their toes turned in. This is called in-toeing and is a normal part of growing up for toddlers. As they reach skeletal maturity this should reduce and no treatment is necessary.

Children who in-toe may tend to trip a little more at first but they will be just as mobile as other children and are no more likely to develop other problems.

Young children often W-sit on the floor, where they sit with their bottom on the floor between their feet. This should be discouraged as it re-enforces the in-toeing and knock knee pattern.
If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 08453 130 130 or e-mail info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk