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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Author: Anne Whiting
Role: Physiotherapist
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Intoeing - your child's legs are OK! (page 1 of 2)

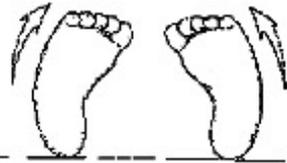
Feet that turn in whilst walking (intoeing)

Many children walk with their feet turned in, but not many adults do. This shows us that, as children grow and develop, their walking pattern improves.

If your child's feet turn in whilst walking this can cause them to trip more often. With growth, children's legs straighten and this improves the position of their feet. Active play for children helps them to improve their balance and co-ordination so in time they will fall less.

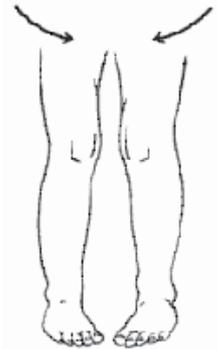
What causes it?

Some children are born with feet that curve inwards (see picture). As the



bones in the feet grow they straighten and this improves the shape of the foot.

Some children have a natural twist - or bowing of the bones in the leg (femur and tibia). With growth the bones straighten, the twisting resolving by itself.



Some children have very bendy joints in their legs. To make their legs feel more stable they turn their hips inwards. As the muscles around the hip strengthen to support the alignment of the leg improves.

How you can help:

- Children should enjoy active play every day such as going for a walk to the park or playing in the garden. Active play encourages bone growth and there will be improvements in your child's motor skills, balance and co-ordination.
- Try stepping stones at the play park (or footsteps marked on the ground), hopping, slowly stepping over obstacles.
- Encourage "tightrope" walking along the ground. Slow careful foot placement with feet placed close together requires balance and with concentration the feet are more likely to face forward.
- Discourage W sitting (see picture) as this encourages the inward twisting of the legs. Instead of letting your child sit on the floor in this position for long periods, encourage your child to sit at a child-sized table.



Children's Physiotherapy
01722 425280

- As with any child, supportive, well fastened and correctly fitting shoes will help with leg posture and walking. Children do not require special shoes; there is no evidence that orthopaedic shoes improve walking patterns.
- Children require calcium and vitamin D for healthy bone growth. Further advice about your child's diet can be found on the NHS Choices website or from your health visitor.

People move with a variety of walking patterns, feet turned in or out, the presence of a mild degree of intoeing is not associated with long term joint problems.