

# FACTSHEET



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## Curly Toes



### What are curly toes?

Curly toes are a common condition that affects infants and children and is present from birth. The condition may become more noticeable as your child begins to walk. It tends to occur in the third and fourth toes of both feet. The toes curl under because the tendons that bend the toes are too tight and pull one toe under the next one, curling it towards the underside of the foot (picture above).

### What causes curly toes?

The condition is known to run in families and may be passed on from parent to child. It is thought that this occurs when the long flexor tendon to the end of the toe is too tight.

### What are the symptoms of curly toes?

In many children curly toes do not cause any symptoms. Some children may experience the following:

- Flattening or thickening of the toenails
- Sores or blisters from pressure
- Difficulty wearing some style of shoes
- Pain or discomfort with activities

### Will my child require treatment?

Curly toes are a variant of normal and generally, do not require treatment unless they are symptomatic. In addition, there is potential for the alignment of the toes to improve spontaneously with growth in the first 5 years of life.

Simple non-surgical measures such as shoes with extra space across the toes may be helpful, but taping has not been shown to make a difference and is not recommended.

Persistent, problematic toes beyond the age of 5 years may be treated with surgery. This involves a simple procedure under an anaesthetic.

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**Remember:**

- Curly toes may improve without treatment as your child grows.
- Taping of curly toes has not been shown to make a difference.
- Shoes that provide extra space across the toes may be helpful.
- If symptoms persist, at any age, and you are concerned, you may be referred to an Orthopaedic doctor.