



**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 important that they are the right size also.

## 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 then talk to the Health Visitor or GP.

**Bow legs** if the gap is pronounced after 2 years or is not correcting itself check with a GP.

**Knock Knees** between 2 and 4 years a gap of around 6 cm (2.5 inches) is considered normal and usually corrects itself, if concerned check with the GP.

**In-toeing** (also known as pigeon toes) where the feet turn in usually corrects itself between 8 – 9 years, treatment usually not needed. If concerned speak to GP.

**Out-toeing** where feet turn out, usually corrects itself and treatment usually not needed.

**Flat feet** if the foot looks flat, but arch forms when on tiptoe, no treatment will normally be needed - if concerned check with the GP.

**Tiptoe walking** if child walks on tiptoe talk to the GP.



© The Early Years and Childcare Publishing  
Partnership with Harrow Council.  
Part of the Early Years Development series