

# Tibial Torsion

## What is tibial torsion?

Tibial torsion is an inward twisting of the tibia (shin bone) and is the most common cause of in-toeing. In-toeing is when a child's feet point inwards when they walk. Tibial torsion is often first noticed when your infant begins to walk. It can affect both legs or just one.



## Who gets it?

Most every child has some degree of tibial torsion when they are babies. It rarely persists into childhood or adult life.

## What is the cause?

In most cases, tibial torsion is thought to result from the way a baby was lying when inside the mother's womb.

## What is the treatment?

Babies with mild to moderate tibial torsion nearly always outgrow it. The use of special shoes does not help. The twisting will gradually decrease over time. If twisting seems to be getting worse and the leg is bowing more, it is important to have your child checked by a doctor.

## Is surgery ever necessary?

Rarely. About one child in 1,000 will not outgrow tibial torsion. If the twisting is severe

and causes difficulty in walking after the age of 8 years, then an operation may be performed. It is necessary to cut the bone and rotate the foot to correct this. The child will be in casts for two to three months after surgery.

## Summary

- Tibial torsion is an inward rotation or twisting of the lower leg bone (tibia).
- Most children outgrow tibial torsion by the age of 3.
- The best treatment is patience, just waiting for the leg to naturally correct itself.
- Special shoes and night splinting are of no proven value.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Orthopedics (206) 987-2109
- Your Child's Health Care Provider

*Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.*

*This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Children's Hospital. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider.*

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