

# Femoral Torsion

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**Femoral torsion is an inward rotation (turning) of the thigh bone at the hip. Most children outgrow it by age 10 to 12. The best treatment is patience, just waiting to see if the legs correct themselves.**

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## What is femoral torsion?

Femoral torsion is an inward turning of the thigh bone (femur) at the hip. The entire leg is rotated so the knee caps point inward. Both legs are usually involved.

This rotation causes in-toeing, a condition where a child's feet point inwards when they walk. Children with intoeing are often referred to as being "pigeon toed". Femoral torsion is a common cause of intoeing. Usually intoeing does not cause any major problems and will correct itself over time. Sometimes children with this condition may run differently or trip occasionally. Also, you or your child may not like the way it looks.



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## Who gets it?

Anyone can have it, but it is more common in girls in early childhood.

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## What is the cause?

The cause of femoral torsion is not known. It tends to run in families. Having your child sit on their bottom with their knees and feet out to the side of the hips ("W" position) will not affect your child's hips or legs or worsen the intoeing. However, sitting on their bottom with their legs crossed (criss-cross applesauce) can be uncomfortable for some children with femoral torsion. Let others know that your child should not be asked to sit this way if it causes pain.

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### To Learn More

- Orthopedics and Sports Medicine  
206-987-2109
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

### What is the treatment?

Most children outgrow this condition. The use of special shoes or braces has not been found to make a difference. Reminding your child to “walk straight” will not correct the condition either. The use of devices or reminders may make the child feel different and can have a negative effect on their self-image.

### When is femoral torsion treated by surgery?

Surgery is rarely required for femoral torsion. Less than 1% of children with femoral torsion are treated with surgery. Surgery should not be performed until the femur has reached the adult shape. It is performed only if the condition produces a **significant** functional or cosmetic problem.

This surgery is a major procedure; the femur is cut, rotated into correct alignment, and fixed in place with a plate and screws. After surgery, the child may not walk on the operated leg for six weeks. Both femurs are usually operated on at the same time, so the child must use a wheelchair and not bear weight on the legs for 6 weeks. Crutches are then used for a few weeks. Physical therapy may also be needed during the recovery.

A second surgery will be performed a year later to remove the plates and screws.