



## PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

### Outtoeing

#### General Information

Outtoeing refers to an excessive degree of pointing the toes outward when walking. To see how true this is, just walk a few steps on some wet sand or in the snow. Then, look at how the toes of your footprint angle outward a bit while you were walking.

A certain amount, usually 10 to 20 degrees, of outtoeing is normal. When the toes head outward more than that, it is called outtoeing. Other names may also be used depending on the type of outtoeing. These include:

- External rotation contracture of infancy
- Femoral retroversion
- External tibia torsion
- External femoral torsion

#### Causes of Outtoeing?

The cause of outtoeing seems to be either muscles that are too weak or too tight. For instance, the tibia (shinbone) connects the knee and ankle. Along it are muscles that connect to the foot and help us walk. If these muscles are too tight or too loose, it affects the way we point our toes. And, if the bone itself is not correctly aligned between the knee and ankle, that too affects the way we walk.

The femur (thighbone) can also be at fault. This thighbone helps control the way we rotate our hips. If it is misaligned, it may affect the way we walk and how our toes point.

#### Symptoms of Outtoeing?

Remember that it is normal for a certain amount of outtoeing. However, if you are concerned, talk to your child's doctor. Often an exam can let you know if the condition is just part of normal development or if it is outtoeing.

The exam will check how your child's feet are angled in relation to his or her thigh. A normal range is between 0 and 30 degrees, pointing outward.

It will also include an evaluation of how your child's hip rotates. For this exam, the doctor will ask your child to lie on his or her stomach and raise the leg upward. Too much or too little rotation will affect how the child walks.

 **Treatment**

Before a child learns to walk, it is normal to see outtoeing. This is especially true if the child is a boy or is of African-American heritage.

If the outtoeing persists and gets in the way of normal walking, surgery may be needed to correct the problem. It has been found that special shoes do not do any good. However, in most cases, the outtoeing causes no problems and so does not require any treatment at all.

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