

Paediatric Orthopaedics

Talipes (clubfoot) and its management at Addenbrooke's Hospital



Talipes (clubfoot) is a condition present before birth in which one or both feet are pulled inwards of the normal position. The affected foot is smaller and the leg thinner than normal, which might not be obvious if both feet are affected. The cause of this is unknown, although there can occasionally be a family history of similar problems.

The treatment offered to children with talipes is the Ponseti technique. This aims to correct the child's foot so that the foot is functional, looks as normal as possible and is pain free with only minimal surgery involved. There are several stages of treatment.



The first stage involves gentle repositioning of the foot or feet and the application of a plaster cast in this new position.

Many children will need to have a release of the tight achilles tendon to ensure that the foot is flexible. This is followed by a further plaster cast applied for three weeks allowing for the wound to heal.

Before release of the heel cord



After release of the heel cord



The final stage will involve your child wearing boots and a bar until he or she is about five years old.

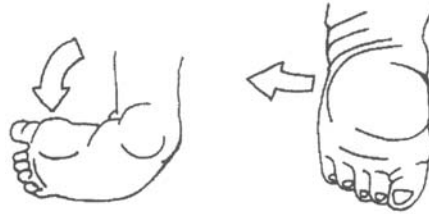


Courtesy of
www.aussiefootkids.org

Before you are seen by the paediatric team, there are a few exercises we would encourage you to perform at each nappy change:

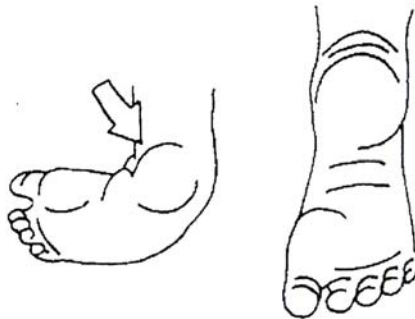
The forefoot or front part of the foot and toes turn in

Grasp the heel between the thumb and index finger of one hand and the forefoot with the other hand. Gently stretch the forefoot away from the heel 5 – 10 times until the foot softens.



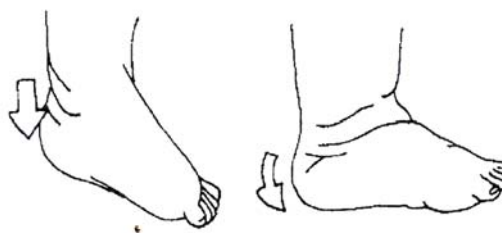
The heel turns inwards

After stretching the forefoot hold the foot in the stretched position. Leave the foot pointing downward. Push the heel outwards 5 – 10 times.



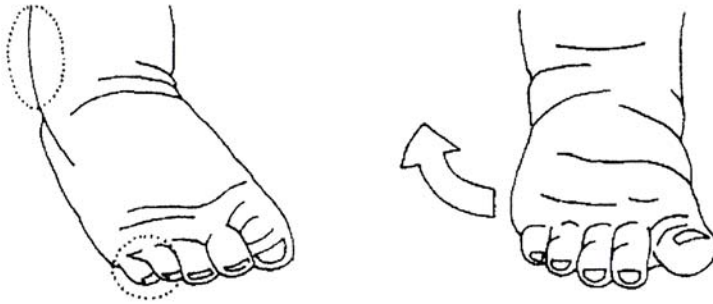
Gaining dorsiflexion (otherwise known as “heel down”)

Straighten the forefoot and the heel as described in steps one and two above. Hold the foot straight with one hand; pull down on the heel with your thumb and index finger to stretch out the calf muscle. Do not push on the toes.



Strengthening

Tickle the fourth and fifth toes, and stroke the outside of the calf and foot for a few seconds. This will help the baby lift the foot up and turn it outwards.



Useful contact numbers:

- The consultant surgeon's secretary Tel: 01223 216101 (or ext 2101)
- The plaster room Tel: 01223 217772 (or ext 3772)
- The physiotherapists Tel: 01223 216633 (or ext 2633)

Useful Websites: www.steps-charity.org.uk
www.ponseti.org.uk



We are currently working towards a smoke-free site. Smoking is only permitted in the designated smoking areas.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS Stop Smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169

Help with this leaflet:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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