



# BOW LEGS

## WHAT ARE BOW LEGS?

Bow legs is a condition where your knees stay wide apart even when you stand with your feet together. Walking might look a little awkward, making the bow legs look worse. For most people bow legs don't cause major problems or impact walking. In some cases, bow legs that aren't treated may lead to arthritis because of the unusual stress the curved legs place on joints in the knees and hips.

## WHO GETS BOW LEGS?

Bow legs are common in infants under the age of 18 months and are seen as a normal variation in appearance for toddlers. Children and adolescents might have bow legs because of bone growth abnormalities while adults could develop bow legs from injury or from certain jobs (e.g. jockey).

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### A MESSAGE FROM Strathalbyn Podiatry

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## WHAT CAUSES BOW LEGS?

Infants usually have bow legs because of their folded position in the mother's womb, but the condition is usually gone by age two. Some diseases that affect leg growth can also cause bow legs. These include rickets (because of a lack of vitamin D), lead or fluoride poisoning, tumours, abnormal bone development, bone breaks that have not healed properly, and Blount's disease (a growth disorder of the shinbone). In many of these cases, one leg is more bowed than the other.

## HOW TO TREAT BOW LEGS

In most cases of children under two years old with symmetrical bowing, treatment is not needed because the condition is normal, but a child with bow legs should be checked every six months. For children older than three years or with asymmetrical bow legs, treatment is recommended. Severe bow legs may require special braces, shoes, or casts. At times (especially if the bow legs are due to trauma or a particular job), surgery might be needed.

## PREVENTING BOW LEGS AND CARING FOR YOUR FEET

There is no known way to prevent bow legs, other than to avoid rickets. Make sure your child has appropriate amounts of vitamin D. Spending a little time in the sun is one way to increase your child's vitamin D levels.

