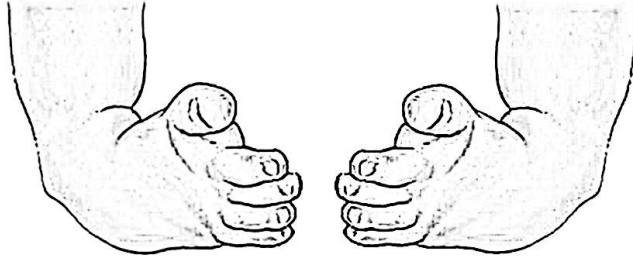


Exercises for Club Foot



What is club foot?

Also known as congenital talipes equinovarus (CTEV), club foot is a deformity of the foot seen at birth. A child with club foot will have either one or both feet rotated internally at the ankle.

Cause of club foot

Although this condition has been seen in babies for many years, no one knows the real reason behind the cause of this condition. There are some factors that have been associated with this condition: hereditary genetic factors or the position of the feet in the womb.

This condition can sometimes be associated with some other medical condition. The doctor should check the rest of the child's body to rule out other associated problems.

Types of club foot

- Postural – The child has no bony abnormality at birth. This often corrects with conservative treatment. However, if the condition is not appropriately treated with exercises, bone deformities may develop.
- Structural – The child has abnormalities in the bones, with poor positioning of the joints and muscle abnormality.

Treatment

Club foot needs to be treated with stretches and exercises taught by a physiotherapist. However, the more severe cases may require further interventions such as casting or even surgery. Treatment should begin as soon as possible after birth, and may last until the child starts going to school.

Exercises

These exercises can be done at any time throughout the day. A good guide would be to do the stretches at every nappy change. The aim of the exercises is to correct the foot position and prevent any muscle shortening. It is also required to strengthen muscles in order to maintain the position.

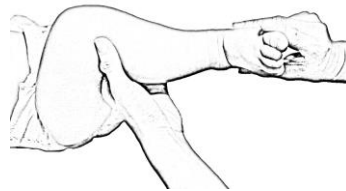
a) Dorsiflexion



With one hand, rotate your child's heel till the heel is aligned with the shin bone. Gently push the foot upwards until it is almost touching the shin, or to a position tolerated by the child.

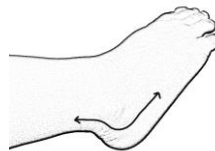
- Do not put pressure on your child's sole as that will encourage curling of toes.
- Do not stretch the toes only as that will encourage rocker bottom foot.

b) External rotation



Bending your child's knee, correct his/her foot as shown by the therapist. Gently turn the foot pointing outwards to 90°, or to an angle tolerated by the child.

c) Stroking



Stroking the outside of your child's foot can help to encourage active foot movement. The stroking should be firm on the skin, either with a short fingernail or with a rounded part of an ice cube.

Other strategies

In some severe cases, these simple stretches are insufficient for correcting the foot position of the child. Some may require special splints to be worn throughout the day, or may require taping to maintain the correct foot position. The therapist will be able to advise on whether your child requires these additional aids.

This information serves as a guideline. For individualised modifications, please approach your physiotherapist.