

In the first 12 months of life, bowed legs are normal. The legs naturally bow outward and begin to straighten as the baby grows. By age four, it is common to see the child walk or run with his knees very close together, perhaps even touching when walking. Usually between the ages of seven to ten the legs become straight. This condition is called knock-knees or genu valgum.

A family history of knock-knees is common. In some cases, the knock-knees are due to trauma to the growth areas in the knees, infections, or very rarely, arthritis. Despite understandable concern, knock-knees do not cause any serious complications or problems in life. Most cases do not require treatment.

What is the Treatment for Knock-Knees?

For most children the treatment is observation, allowing time and growth to correct the legs. You may want to take a photo of your child standing and, several months later, take another photo to compare the straightening process.

Only in rare cases is surgery needed (after ten years of age) to correct the legs. Generally surgery is performed for cosmetic reasons and not because of medical necessity.

Facts about Knock-Knees

- Knock-knees may continue into adulthood but should not cause any problems.
- Children with knock-knees can effectively participate in sports
- Bracing will not correct the normal growth pattern of knock-knees