

## **Knock-Knees (Genu Valgum)**

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 ages 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. Although it is of an understandable concern to you and your child, 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 picture of your child standing and, several months later, take another photo to compare the straightening process.

Occasionally, bracing is used if the knock-knees continue to progress. Only in rare cases is an operation 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.