



## Shoes for Active Toddlers

In the early months, babies' feet (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Babys-Changing-Feet.aspx>) develop best if they're not confined in shoes; socks are all that's needed to keep their feet warm; however, once children start walking outdoors, they need shoes for protection.



## Shoe Shopping Tips for Parents

- Look for comfortable shoes with nonskid soles, such as sneakers, that will help keep your toddler steady on slippery floors.
- Buy well-made shoes, but don't spend a lot of money.
- At this stage, your child's feet grow so rapidly that the first pair of shoes won't last more than 2 or 3 months.

## Checking the Fit

You should check the fit about once a month; the top of your child's big toe should be about finger-width distance from the inside edge of the shoe. It's better to have no shoes at all than shoes that are too tight.

## Common Concerns from Parents

*"My 15 month old is showing no signs of getting ready to walk. He shows little interest in moving about."*

- **Possible cause:** Developmental delay (</English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Assessing-Developmental-Delays.aspx>)
- **What parents should do:** Talk with your pediatrician to arrange an evaluation of your toddler's development.

*"My child turns her toes noticeably inward when she walks."*

- **Possible cause:** Normal developmental stage
- **What parents should do:** This tendency usually disappears as your child matures. It rarely interferes with mobility. See Pigeon Toes (Intoeing) (</English/health-issues/conditions/orthopedic/Pages/Pigeon-Toes-Intoeing.aspx>).

*"My child is limping. She is complaining of pain."*

- **Possible cause:** Injury, infection, arthritis (</English/health-issues/conditions/orthopedic/Pages/Arthritis.aspx>), or another condition that requires treatment
- **What parents should do:** If you can't see and remove an obvious source of pain, such as a splinter (</English/health-issues/conditions/skin/Pages/Splinters-and-Other-Foreign-Bodies-in-the-Skin.aspx>), ask your pediatrician to determine the cause of the limp.

*"My child limps but isn't complaining of pain. He walks with a waddling gait."*

- **Possible cause:** Neuromuscular weakness or hip joint disorder (</English/health-issues/conditions/orthopedic/Pages/Hip-Dysplasia.aspx>)
- **What parents should do:** Talk with your pediatrician, who will examine your child and determine whether he should be seen by another pediatric specialist.

*"My child often walks on the balls of her feet after many months of walking."*

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- **Possible cause:** Habit or a neuromuscular problem
- **What parents should do:** Although normal during early walking, walking on the toes or the balls of the feet after 2 years of age should be evaluated. Ask your pediatrician to determine whether your child has a problem that requires treatment.

*"My toddler has difficulty walking. He falls a lot and has trouble getting on his feet again. He uses his hands to climb up his legs when trying to stand. He tends to waddle when he walks."*

- **Possible cause:** Muscular dystrophy or another neuromuscular condition that requires diagnosis and treatment
- **What parents should do:** Call your pediatrician, who will examine your child and may refer you to another pediatric specialist. If the diagnosis is confirmed, your child will need long-term treatment. Your pediatrician will also help you find support groups for children and parents.

**Last Updated** 6/10/2015

**Source** The Big Book of Symptoms: A-Z Guide to Your Child's Health (Copyright © 2014 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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