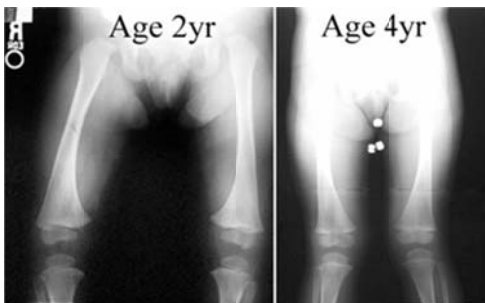
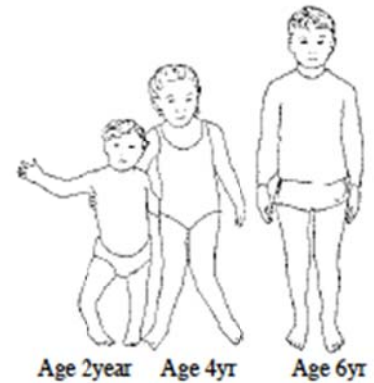


Bowlegs and Knock-Knees

Definition

- The development of bowlegs and knock-knees is a normal part of childhood development and is usually not a concern
- Genu Valgum, also known as knock-knees, is when the legs are held straight, the angle of the knees touch. Mild genu valgum is very common in children from age 2-5.
- Genu Varum, also known as bowlegs, is when the legs are held straight, the knees are far apart with each leg giving the appearance of an archer's bow. The condition is very common between birth and the age of 3.
- Though usually symmetric, sometimes only one leg is affected
- Despite possibly causing stress in the parent, these conditions are both common and self-limited – meaning that the child's legs will develop a more straight appearance from ages 6 to 10. Some mild variations persist in the adult and may differ between sexes.
- If the conditions persists in to adulthood, the individual may be more prone to injury, chronic knee pain, and osteoarthritis
- In rare instances are these conditions associated with underlying disease or permanent deformities. Further inspection is indicated when a child develops difficulty walking, the condition persists as they continue to age, or presents with other alarming symptoms



Examination

- The diagnosis of bowlegs or knock-knees is made by visual examination while standing and observing the child walk
 - Rarely, radiographs are ordered to rule out underlying bony abnormalities
 - The presence of alarming symptoms or atypical presentations may indicate a metabolic work up to rule out other disease processes

Treatment

- The most common treatment of both conditions is to observe the child over time.
- No amount of orthotic treatment or strength training will correct bowlegs or knock-knees, in either the child or the adult. Thus special shoes or braces are not advised
- Very severe cases that persist past the age of 8 or 10 can be surgically corrected by temporarily stopping one side of the growth plate with a removable plate. When proper alignment is achieved, the plate is removed