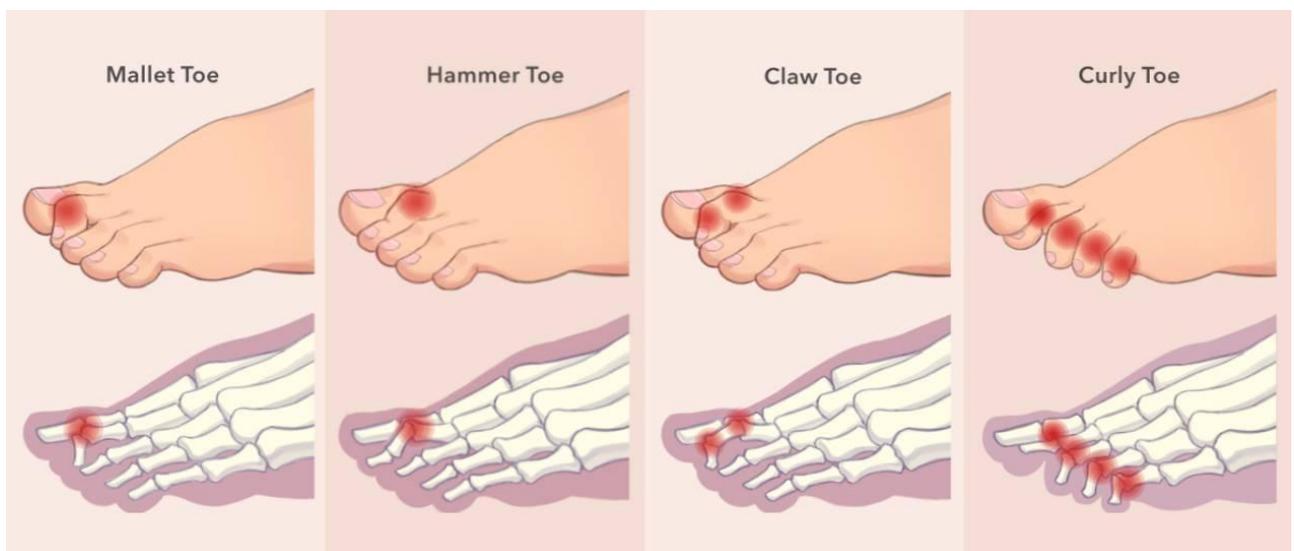


Curly Toe (Clinodactyly) in Children



What is Curly Toe?

Curly toe is a common foot condition in children where one or more toes curve downward or sideways, giving a “curled” appearance. It most often affects the **little toe** but can affect other toes as well.

It is usually **harmless** and often improves as the child grows.

Who is affected?

- Most common in **toddlers and young children**.
- Can affect **one or both feet**.
- Often noticed when the child is barefoot or wearing socks.

Causes

- Curly toe is usually **congenital** (present at birth).
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- Caused by a small abnormality in the **tendons, ligaments, or bones** of the toe.
 - In most cases, it is **not linked to other health problems**.

Symptoms

- Toe appears **curved or twisted**.
 - Usually **painless**.
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- May cause **difficulty wearing shoes** if severe.
 - Rarely, the curled toe can develop **calluses or pressure spots**.

Diagnosis

- Made by a **physical examination** by a doctor or podiatrist.
- X-rays are rarely needed unless the toe is severe or painful.

Treatment

Mild cases

- Often **no treatment is needed**.
 - Most toes **straighten naturally** as the child grows.
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- Stretching exercises or gentle manipulation may be suggested in some cases.

Moderate or severe cases

- **Special footwear** or toe splints may be recommended.
- **Physiotherapy** can help improve flexibility and prevent pressure sores.
- **Surgery** is rarely needed, usually only if the toe is **painful or interferes with walking**.

When to see a doctor

Seek medical advice if:

- The toe causes **pain or discomfort**.
- The child **has trouble wearing shoes or walking**.
- The toe becomes **red, swollen, or develops sores**.
- The curve **worsens as the child grows**.

Prognosis

- Most children with mild curly toes **grow out of it naturally**.
- Severe cases are uncommon and **usually respond well to treatment**.
- Children can **walk and play normally** in most cases.

Key Points

- Curly toe is **common and usually harmless**.
 - Most cases **do not need treatment**.
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- Severe or painful toes should be **assessed by a doctor or podiatrist**.

References:

- American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society – Paediatric Foot Conditions
- NHS: Curly Toe / Clinodactyly