



Suffolk Podiatry

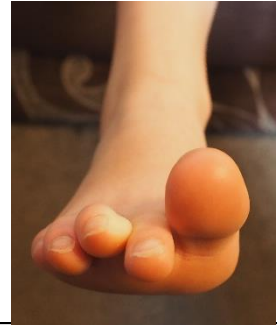
Curly Toes in Children

What are curly toes and what causes them?

“Curly Toe” is a term used to describe a toe (or multiple toes) that bend so that they sometimes underlap or overlap a neighbouring toe.

The toes curl because the tendons that allow them to bend are too tight and pull the toe down, curling it towards the underside of the foot. It is often noticed early in infancy and can occur on one foot or both, most commonly affecting the third, fourth or fifth toes or a combination of these.

What causes the tendons to tighten is unknown, but there is thought to be a strong genetic link, affecting 3% of the population



Symptoms

For most children, the main symptom is the appearance of the toe curling under. Generally, there are no other symptoms and the toe/s will often self-correct around the age of 6. Sometimes the change in the position of the toes can cause difficulty with footwear rubbing or not fitting correctly. In some cases, hard skin may be present but this usually causes few problems.

Curly toes are often cause no symptoms, require no treatment and usually improve with age. The toe usually stays flexible. Sometimes the toe can become fixed in position, but there is no evidence to suggest this causes problems in later life.

Management

Suffolk Podiatry do not provide treatment for curly toes, however there are some simple self-care treatments you can try:

- Stretching – stretch the toes out to try and keep them supple. This can be done during bath time or as part of a bedtime routine
- Nail Care – ensure nails are correctly trimmed to avoid them digging in to the other toes
- Footwear – make sure footwear has enough depth and width for the toes to prevent them rubbing together
- Taping – you can try taping the curled toe to the adjacent toes to hold the curly toe out straight
- Interdigital wedges – these small pieces of silicone can be bought from chemists or online retailers and can be used to stop toes rubbing against each other

Different self-care methods suit some children better than others so if your child experiences discomfort or pain with self-care then it might be better to do nothing at all.

- Surgery – if the toes are causing significant trouble, such as ongoing painful blisters or rubbing, a small operation can be performed on the underside of the toe to release the tight tendon. Your doctor might consider referring your child to a specialist surgeon if they find that this is necessary.