



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Idiopathic Toe Walking

Idiopathic toe walking is when your child walks on the balls of their feet while their heels are off the ground and there is no known medical cause. Research has shown that physical therapy may not eliminate toe walking but can address the condition. This is an important part of your child's plan.

Physical Therapists Can:

- Access your child's muscle strength, foot position, and range of motion.
- Help your child keep or improve ankle motion with serial casting, ankle braces, and/or night splinting.

Goals of Physical Therapy

- Achieve and keep good ankle motion
- Find a treatment option that may decrease toe walking
- Walk pain free

Treatment

There are two treatment options for toe walking. The best option for your child depends on how much ankle motion they have. Treatment may include one or both options and may also include ongoing follow-up appointments.

- Ankle braces – used if your child has good ankle motion but needs to be reminded to not walk on their toes.
- Serial casting – used if your child does not have good ankle motion. Casts are applied each week to hold and stretch muscles in the ankle. The number of casts is different for each child and may take up to 6 weeks. Ankle braces are often worn after casting is completed.