Positional talipes is a common condition which can affect one or both of your baby’s feet. The cause is largely unknown; it is thought to be due to the position of the baby in the womb.

There are two main types of positional talipes:

1. **Talipes Equinovarus**
   Your baby’s foot turns inwards and the front half of the foot points down.

2. **Talipes Calcaneovalgus**
   Your baby’s foot is pushed up and the front half of the foot turns outwards.

Positional talipes shortens and tightens the soft tissues, including ligaments, tendons and muscles, around your baby’s foot. In most cases treatment involves stretches only, which are done by the parents.

**The role of the physiotherapist**

If your baby is diagnosed with positional talipes, the physiotherapist will assess your baby’s feet while you are in hospital. You will be given advice and shown stretching techniques to encourage your baby’s foot to return to its normal position.

The paediatrician or physiotherapist will also decide whether your baby needs to be followed up after discharge home. Your baby may be referred to an orthopaedic clinic at The Royal Children’s Hospital.

**What can I do to help my baby?**

It is important to correct the position of your baby’s foot to ensure there are no long term problems with walking. The repositioning techniques shown on the next page should be performed at daytime nappy change to help stretch the tightened soft tissues.
Stretching techniques

☐ Talipes Equinovarus – where there is tightness on the inside of your baby’s foot
  • Hold your baby’s lower leg with one hand.
  • Use your other hand to gently turn the heel and foot out in line with the lower leg.
  • Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds.
  • Repeat 3 times every nappy change.

☐ Talipes Calcaneovalgus – where there is tightness on the front of your baby’s foot
  • Hold your baby’s lower leg with one hand.
  • Use your other hand to gently point the toes down away from the lower leg.
  • Hold this stretch for 10–15 seconds.
  • Repeat 3 times every nappy change.

Other ways to help your baby

• Touching and massaging your baby’s lower leg can help stimulate and strengthen the muscles that need to work to reposition your baby’s foot to the correct position. Use baby oil to massage around your baby’s foot and lower leg.

• It is important to allow your baby to move their feet freely. Avoid swaddling/wrapping your baby’s feet too tightly.

In most cases your baby will have no long term side effects. It is important to continue your baby’s stretches until you see the Maternal Child Health Nurse.

If you have any further questions contact:
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