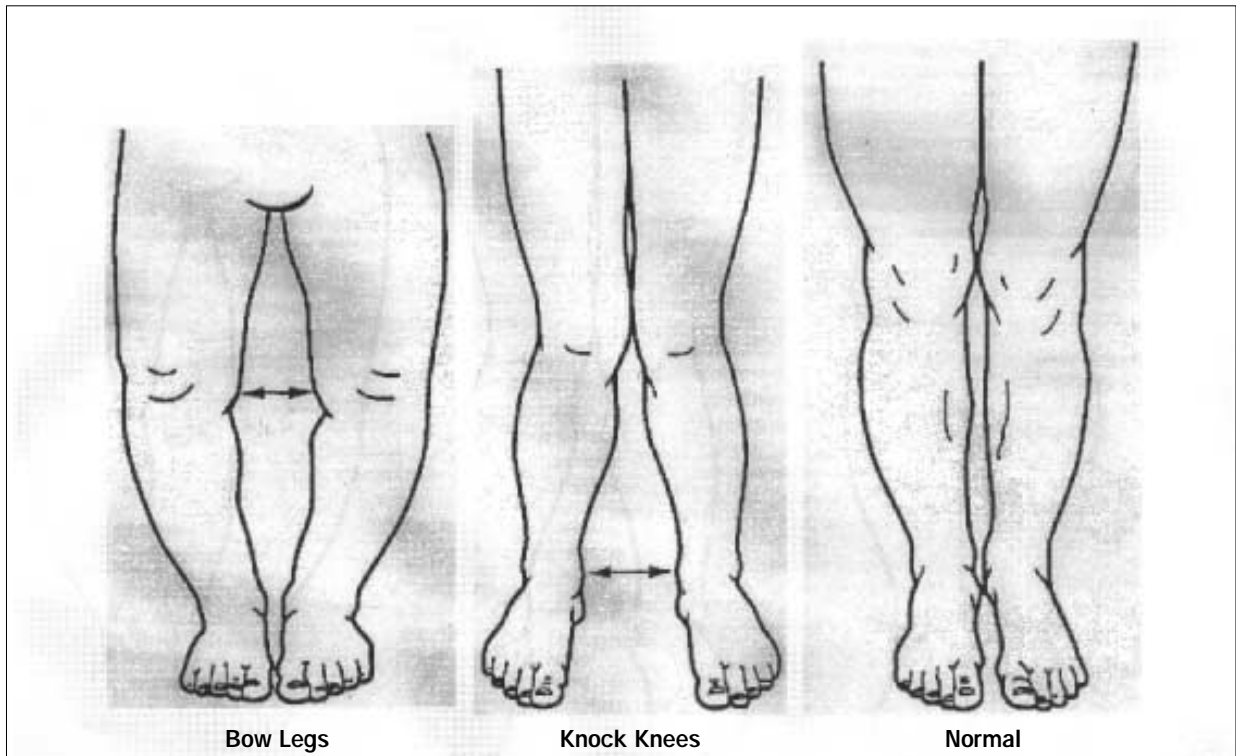


Bow Legs and Knock Knees



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Knock knees and bow legs are relatively common in infants and children but are usually no cause for concern. They are stages that children pass through and it is important to remember that most legs are perfectly straight by the teenage years.

Bow legs (genu varum)

Bow legs are very common up to the age of three years. In fact they are quite normal up to the age of 2-3 years. This means that when the ankles are touching the knees are apart. Bow legs usually correct themselves when the child starts walking, so much so that from about the age of four there is a tendency for the child to develop knock knees.

How can you check progress?

If we are concerned about the extent of the bow legs the problem can be monitored by measuring the distance between the knees (DBK). If this is greater than 6cm and not improving at four years and older it would be advisable to have them checked by your doctor.

Knock knees

Knock knees are also normal in children and most have these between the ages of three and eight years.

The rule for normal three year olds is:

- 50% have 3-5cm between the ankles (DBA).
- 25% have more than 5cm.

These invariably straighten nicely after eight years.

How can you check progress?

For any concerns about the degree of knock knees, measure the distance between the ankles (DBA). It should be checked by your doctor if the DBA is greater than 8cm after the age of eight and not improving.

Rules in summary

These states are normal:

- Bow legs 0-3 years.
- Knock knees 3-8 years.
- Legs straight by adolescence.

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