

Paediatric Simple Toe Syndactyly

This leaflet offers more information about syndactyly between the 2nd and 3rd toes. If you have any further questions, please speak to your General Practitioner (GP).

What is toe syndactyly and why does it happen?

Syndactyly or 'webbed toes' occurs when two toes are connected by skin or tissue. It is especially common between the 2nd and 3rd toes. It is so common should be considered as being on the normal spectrum.



Most cases of 2nd/3rd toe syndactyly are "simple incomplete". This means connection between the toes does not involve the bones and does not extend to the tips of the toes, with two separate nail plates.

We don't know why it occurs, but it is not associated with any other conditions.

Parents are often concerned about the impact of having webbed toes on the child's ability to walk and run and the possibility of future bullying.

How will having toe syndactyly affect my child?

A simple incomplete 2nd/3rd toe syndactyly will not impair the function or movement of the toes or foot. It will not affect your child's ability to walk and run and play sports.

Surgery will leave scars on the foot, which can be problematic. Scars can become red and raised and itchy or irritable.

Scarring will often draw more attention to the difference than an unoperated foot. Older people report that they didn't experience bullying as a child and that most people don't notice the webbed toes until they pointed it out.

Does my child need treatment?

We strongly advise against operating on simple incomplete 2nd/3rd toe syndactyly.

It is not as simple as separating the skin between the toes. It is a complex procedure requiring a general anaesthetic. There is insufficient skin between the toes, so a skin graft is needed from somewhere else on the body, resulting in another permanent scar.

The risks of the surgery and potential complication of poor scarring outweigh the benefits when there is no functional reason to carry out a separation of the toes.

What next?

If you feel that there is something different about your child that requires a closer look from us, please ask your GP to highlight these differences and attach a photograph of the toes in their referral to us.

Contact

If you have any questions or concerns about child's simple toe syndactyly or referral, please speak with your GP and ask them to re refer to the Plastic Surgery team.

For more information, leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough Wing.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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