



Ponseti Boots and Bar

Treatment for Clubfoot

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information

The Ponseti treatment is the worldwide gold standard for treating Talipes Equino-Varus or clubfoot. If treatment is successful, the foot will be painless, functional and need no further treatment.

What are boots and bar?

The Boots and Bar (properly known as a Foot Abduction Brace) are special shoes that are attached to a device that keeps the foot and ankle at a certain posture, as part of Ponseti Treatment for Talipes.

There are several different designs of Boots and Bar that are used depending on the circumstances of each child's feet. The most common design used at Christchurch Hospital OOPD is the Mitchell Boots and Bar. Christchurch Hospital also fits Dobbs bars (used in conjunction with the John Mitchell Boots).



Steps Clubfoot Care (steps.org.za) and mdorthopaedics.com



The width of the Mitchell Brace is the distance from the middle screw in one black circle to the middle screw in second black circle.

The width of the Dobbs Brace is the distance from the middle screw in one black circle to the middle screw in second black circle.

Ignacio Ponseti Foundation Poland

Why are the boots and bar important?

The boots and bar hold the feet in the position needed to stop the muscles and ligaments becoming tight again after the foot has been corrected.

Without the boots and bar, the chance of relapse is very high.

How long will my child wear the boots and bar?

For the first three months after plasters, the Boots and Bar is worn twenty-three hours per day. They can only be removed for bathing and dressing (approximately half-hour).

After three months the boots and bar are worn for sleeping and napping only. This is usually up to the age of four or five years.

Who can fit the boots and bar?

The Clinic Nurse usually does the first fitting and alignment of the brace. You will then be taught how to fit them yourself, so that the boots can be fitted at home. The boots are set at the correct angle, which must not be altered by anyone other than your Nurse or Orthopaedic Surgeon.



How do I put the boots on?

Boots should always be worn with socks (It's important to ensure there are no wrinkles present in the socks). Sometimes special Ponseti socks are needed in cases where the skin is sensitive. These have two layers and some extra grip on the sole.

1. Ensuring that the buckles are on the **INSIDE** of the child's foot, place their heel firmly into the back and bottom of the boot.
2. While holding the heel in place, place the tongue of the boot across the foot and ankle and firmly fasten the middle strap first across the midfoot.
3. Then fasten the toe and shin straps.
4. Check that the heel is well down inside the boot by sighting the position through the viewing ports in the heels of the boots.
5. Attach the boots to the bar.

And away you go!

Heel right down inside the boot is critical!

If the heel is not held down sufficiently, the Achilles tendon may re-tighten, requiring further plastering.

Seeing the toes disappearing backwards into the boot is a sure sign the heel is lifting out of the boot. If this occurs reapply the boot.

If it is happening continuously, please make an appointment to see the Orthopaedic Nurse for a solution.

Will my child be comfortable in the boots?

Your child will most likely be upset when they first have the boots fitted. This is not because they are in pain. It is because it is frustrating for your child to have both feet joined together in the bar. Babies will quickly get used to the brace and life will go back to normal.

Young children are generally very tolerant of the Boots and Bar, once they are used to them. Tolerance can sometimes wane in the last year or so of treatment. There are solutions to tolerance issues which may mean changing the set-up or design of brace.

If you notice your child is more upset than usual, check that the boots are fitted correctly and that they are not pulling out of the boots. Always keep a check on your child's skin. Rubbing or blisters indicate that boots are not fitting correctly and your child will need to be seen by Orthopaedic Outpatients to find a solution to the problem.

You must contact your nurse if

- The heel is not staying down in the boot
- You have difficulty fitting the boots yourself.
- You are worried your child's skin looks sore.
- If you think the boots and bar look too small or are damaged.
- If you are concerned about your child's feet or the brace.

The boots and bar are crucial to the Ponseti Technique.

If you do not use the boots and bar correctly for the prescribed time, the treatment is likely to be unsuccessful. This will result in a less than optimal foot and the likelihood of further plasters or surgery.



Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Boots and Bars Treatment, please phone the OOPD nurses on either 03 364 0800 or 021 951 261. If out of hours phone 021 628 224.