

Conditions we treat: Clubfoot

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Clubfoot is a common condition where the feet internally rotate at the ankle. As a result, the feet point down and inward, making the soles of the feet face each other, causing extreme pain when walking. Clubfoot is a congenital deformity present at birth with an unknown cause called idiopathic. However, clubfoot can also result from a congenital condition like [spina bifida](#) or arthrogyryosis.

In terms of what you can see physically, even without any medical background, clubfoot can be classified into two groups: bilateral and unilateral clubfoot. Bilateral clubfoot is a type of clubfoot that affects both feet, and unilateral only affects one foot.

[Dorcas](#), with bilateral clubfoot, dropped out of school because she could no longer bear the pain of walking the long-distance every day. **“If I am not educated, I will not amount to anything in life,”** Dorcas told us before the surgery.

Thankfully, she received sponsored treatment at the CURE Children’s Hospital of Zambia. As a result, Dorcas is now walking with straight feet! Today, she gets to attend school and work toward a successful and bright future.



Clubfoot affects children physically and emotionally. Physically, it is painful to walk with clubfoot. The majority of children with this condition cannot put on proper shoes, and some can not put on any shoes at all.

Emotionally, they feel neglected and outcasted by people in their community. Due to their condition, they cannot participate in the same activities that their peers enjoy. Some children with clubfoot also struggle with getting an education because they can't walk to school. **Without treatment, these children often grow up without the education or physical ability to work and live in poverty.**

You can manage clubfoot with both non-surgical and surgical intervention. The non-surgical approach is ideal for children under two, using the [ponseti method](#), which involves applying casts on the feet over a period of time. When the desired correction is achieved, doctors perform a small operation to release the tendon on top of the heel. The child will then wear braces until about 4 to 5 years.

Surgical intervention is typical for children older than two years. Our surgeons employ numerous procedures depending on the severity of the condition and the child's age. Some children have one surgical procedure, while others have multiple, depending on the severity of the clubfoot. After the surgery, doctors wrap the foot in a cast which will undergo a series of dressing changes and manipulations over several weeks. The child has a final cast on for several weeks when the desired correction is achieved. After the healing process, physiotherapists help the child with rehabilitation exercises and how to walk with straightened feet.



(left) Dorcas before surgery, (right) Dorcas after surgery

The cause of clubfoot is unknown, and the prevalence of clubfoot in low- and middle-income countries is high. However, this is a treatable condition. **With your support, CURE is making a difference for children with clubfoot and giving them hope for a bright future.** With corrective surgery, they can put on proper shoes, attend school, and engage in activities with their peers.

One of the beautiful things about CURE is that it allows everyone to participate in the transforming surgeries at CURE hospitals worldwide. You don't need to understand words like bilateral, ventricle, genu valgum,

congenital, or cerebral-spinal fluid to take part in the life-changing and life-saving work that is done. But with this said, having an understanding of the conditions CURE treats does allow a deeper appreciation of just how important the work your donation is enabling the CURE staff to do!

To support a child's surgery, [click here.](#)