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A Tradition of Leadership and Excellence in Equine Medicine

**Watch for angular limb deformities in weanlings/short yearlings
Or
The conformation on weanlings/short Yearlings is still changing
Donnie E. Slone, Jr. D.V.M., Dip. A.C.V.S.**

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Now is not the time to stop looking at your weanling's conformation. They are still changing, and carpal varus (bow-legged) is a fairly common complaint especially in youngsters with off-set knees and wide chests. They will also develop carpal valgus (knock-kneed) deformities occasionally. These deformities are classified as developmental as opposed to the congenital deformities that many foals are born with and they are often associated with some degree of physitis.

These deformities, unlike the congenital deformities that almost always correct without surgical intervention, will usually need surgery to correct the angular portion of the conformational problem. We cannot correct off-set knees. The surgery will be some form of transphyseal bridging using screws and wire, which I prefer, or staple. Either kind of implant will have to be removed when the leg is straight. There are some that will correct without surgery by following your Veterinarian's exercise and nutritional recommendations, but the surgery has to be done before the radius stops growing in length, which is in the range of 12-14 months of age. Obviously then, conservation therapy will only be useful if the condition is noticed early. Hopefully the tips listed above (off-set knees, wide chests and physitis) will help you pay closer attention to these youngsters, but unfortunately not all of the developmental deformities will exhibit these signs.

Have your Veterinarian check any of the horses in your care that you are concerned about. If you or they have any questions, I would be glad to consult with either of you.