

# Tibialis Anterior Tendon Transfer (TATT)

This leaflet explains more about a TATT, including the benefits, risks and what to expect when your child comes to hospital.

If you have any further questions, please speak to your surgeon or another member of the team caring for your child.

## What is a TATT?

A tendon is a structure that joins muscle to bone. The tibialis anterior tendon joins the tibialis anterior muscle to a bone in the inner part of the foot. During this surgery, it is detached from its original position and reattached to a bone on the outer part of the foot. This helps balance the muscles of the foot.

## Why should my child have a TATT?

Your child has been treated for clubfoot but it has been noticed that they are walking on the outside part of their foot or turning their foot in when walking. This happens when there is a muscle imbalance in the foot and some muscles are weak compared to others. It is important to treat this early to help prevent the foot and ankle becoming stiff and requiring more extensive surgery.

## What are the risks?

Any operation carries a risk. The risks are rare but can include infection, changes to sensation and the need for further intervention in the future. All the specific surgical risks will be explained to you by the surgeon and any anaesthetic risks will be discussed with the anaesthetist.

## Are there any alternatives?

In the first instance, if there is any loss of range of motion at the foot and ankle, we offer serial casting, however this will not address the muscle imbalance. Strengthening exercises are also recommended from a very young age. If your child was recommended a TATT it may mean that the alternative treatments were not successful and further input is needed. It is not an urgent intervention but a timely one.

## **How can I prepare my child for a TATT?**

You will receive all the relevant information regarding the date and time of your child's surgery, including where to go and instructions for fasting. Your child may require serial casting prior to the operation and that will be arranged with the Ponseti clinic team. Usually weight-bearing is restricted for 4-6 weeks after surgery. Your child may require a wheelchair or crutches for a period. The surgery is completed as a day-case, meaning that your child will be able to go home the same day once recovered.

## **Asking for your consent**

It is important that you feel involved in decisions about your child's care. You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you agree to the treatment plan and understand what is involved. You can withdraw your consent at any time, even if you have said 'yes' previously. If you would like more details about our consent process, please ask your child's surgeon or a member of the team.

## **What happens during a TATT?**

The tendon is moved to the outside of the foot and fixed with a button on the bottom of the foot. The button will stay in place for six weeks with a plaster cast over the leg. Sometimes a tendon lengthening is also required. Weight bearing instructions will be confirmed with your surgeon.

## **Will my child feel any pain?**

It is not uncommon for children to report some discomfort. The operation is done under a general anaesthetic, so once your child has woken up it is important to let the medical team know if there is any pain. Before your child is discharged from hospital you will be given specific instructions regarding how to manage any pain at home. The clinical nurse specialist will provide post operative instructions and a point of contact in case there are any questions or problems at home.

## **What happens after a TATT?**

Your child might feel a bit sleepy or unsettled immediately after the anaesthesia. They will remain on the ward for a few hours for recovery, during which they will have regular checks by the nurses to ensure they are comfortable, pain-free and that they are safe for discharge. They will be allowed food and drink on the ward.

A physiotherapist will see them before or after surgery to confirm weightbearing instructions and help your child practise with crutches or a frame if needed.

Some people find it useful to source a wheelchair for use during longer distances. If both feet have been operated on, your child will need a wheelchair or a pushchair.

This cannot be provided by the hospital. The team will provide you with information on where you can hire one from and families will need to cover the cost of the wheelchair hire.

## What do I need to do after my child comes home?

After your child is home, they will need to elevate their leg(s) and rest for a few days. They may also need some pain relief. Your child will not be able to do all their usual activities, but we recommend they continue to participate in activities of daily living e.g. feeding and dressing. The physiotherapy team may also provide a specific programme to help maintain your child's strength. It is important that you avoid getting the cast wet to protect your child's skin.

## Will my child have a follow-up appointment?

Six weeks after the operation, the cast and button will be removed in clinic. A splint may be given for your child to wear when walking, depending on the surgeon's preference. Your child may also be given a splint to wear at nighttime for a period. They might feel a bit uncomfortable at the sole of the foot, where the tendon was attached. This will improve with time.

We suggest regular rehabilitation sessions for the first few months out of cast. Rehabilitation may be carried out by your local physiotherapist or the Ponseti Clinic team, depending on location and availability across both services.

Your child can gradually resume activities after the cast is removed. They usually can participate in some sports and other activities around two months after their surgery but will be advised to avoid running and jumping for 6 months, unless otherwise instructed by the team. This will be agreed in detail with your surgeon.

## Useful sources of information

Steps Charity:

[Health Professionals - Charity Work | Steps Charity \(stepsworldwide.org\)](https://www.stepsworldwide.org/)

A charity that provides information about clubfoot and the Ponseti method, as well as a discussion forum for parents.

## Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

**The Ponseti clinic:** 020 8725 1890 email: [ponsetiservice@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:ponsetiservice@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

**Orthopaedic Clinical Nurse Specialist:** 02086721255 (request bleep 6021)

**Orthotics team:** 020 8487 6056/6033 email: [orthotics.qmh@stgeorges.nhs.uk](mailto:orthotics.qmh@stgeorges.nhs.uk)

**For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit [www.stgeorges.nhs.uk](http://www.stgeorges.nhs.uk)**

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## 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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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