

Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH)

This leaflet is to be used in conjunction with the 'Steps' Charity leaflet titled 'Caring for Your Child in a Pavlik Harness – The Parents' Guide'. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What treatments are available?

If your baby's scan has shown they have DDH of one or both hips they will be referred to the specialist physiotherapy team. If your baby is diagnosed with DDH, their treatment usually consists of wearing a special harness. A physiotherapist will aim to see you after the scan, or within 5 working days.

The physiotherapist will complete:

- Full assessment of your baby
- Education on what DDH is and the treatment pathway
- Pavlik Harness application
- Education on caring for your baby in Pavlik harness (including cleaning, how to position and handle your baby, etc)

If you are not seen on the same day as the scan, things to bring to the appointment:

- Larger clothes (1-2 size up, avoiding tights and trousers)
- Baby carrier / sling (if you have one)
- Blanket

Your baby will be seen in clinic on a regular basis, initially weekly then fortnightly, until the harness is ready to be removed. Time in harness varies depending on how the hips develop.

What happens if my baby does not get treatment?

The hip will likely not develop normally causing it to become more unstable and grow abnormally. This could result in early arthritis and difficulty walking as well as pain later on. Surgical management involving the soft tissues and/or bones may be required.

Is there anything I can do to help my baby?

While awaiting the initial appointment, please continue to move and handle your baby as you have been - you will not hurt them or worsen their hips in any way. There are, however, a few things you can do to help as outlined below:

- Do not swaddle your baby's legs, as the best position for hip development is in a frog position.
- Do not lie your baby on their side for prolonged periods.
- Start to or continue to complete supervised tummy time at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Encourage floor play on their backs and tummies (use baby bouncers and car seats as little as possible)
- Using a baby carrier/sling can help hips develop, provided thighs are supported well, knees are at the same height or higher than the bottom and baby's legs spread around the adult's torso (see image below)

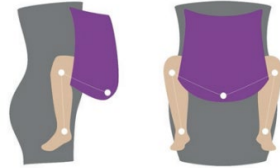


Image from STEPS 'Baby Hip Health'

Fitting the Pavlik harness

The harness should be firmly fitted but not so tight that the straps dig into the skin. You should be able to place one finger under all the straps on the harness.

Once the harness is fitted, your baby should not feel any pain or discomfort, although they may grumble when it is first applied.

Your baby is likely to be more unsettled for the first few days after the harness is fitted as they get used to it.

Monitoring leg movement

Please make sure you are monitoring your baby's leg movements while they are in the harness. There is a risk of femoral nerve palsy from use of Pavlik harness. The baby should be:

- Kicking their legs out to the sides regularly
- Straightening the leg at the knee

If you notice that one or both legs stop kicking, then you need to contact us via email immediately. If this is out of hours, please remove the harness and contact us first thing the next working day. You can always send a video via email if you are unsure.

Working hours Monday – Friday 8:30-4:30. This is not a weekend service.

Wearing the harness

Once the harness is fitted, it should remain on until the physiotherapist adjusts or changes it. Your baby will need to wear the harness for 23 or 24 hours per day. You will be instructed by your physiotherapist.

Cleaning

Unfortunately your baby won't be able to have a bath while they are in the harness if they are instructed to wear it 24 hours per day. You will need to give your baby a sponge wash. When washing your baby, we advise you to check between their skin creases, especially around the neck, under their arms, groin and behind their knees as these can become sore. If there are areas of redness, use a small amount of barrier cream such as Sudocrem. Should you become concerned that the skin is getting worse please contact us immediately.

If the harness becomes soiled between appointments, initially try to spot clean it with an old toothbrush and soap. Staining of the harness will happen as the harness is white. If the harness has become very unclean, please contact the team and we can advise as appropriate.

Feeding

You may loosen the chest strap during feeding to allow for your baby's tummy to expand. It will need to be retightened again afterwards. Ensure you can get two fingers under the chest strap. If you are having trouble feeding with the harness, please seek support from your local feeding team or ask the physiotherapy team for advice.

Clothing

Avoid tight, restrictive clothing such as leggings or tights as these can pull your baby's hips into a position that counteracts the harness. Check that your baby can move his/her arms and legs freely when dressed. We want them to be able to hold their legs in an outwards frog legged position when in clothes. 'Hip harness friendly' clothing can be found at M&S, Next and John Lewis. You can also try dressing your baby in clothes that are the size bigger. The physiotherapy department has some donated DDH clothes from past patients so please speak to us if this is something you would like support with.

Useful sources of information

If you would like further information about Baby Hip Health and DDH, please visit STEPS Charity website at: www.stepsworldwide.org/conditions/hip-dysplasia-ddh

Contact us

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If you have any questions or concerns about immature hips, please contact the Children's Physiotherapy Team via email at DDHPhysio@stgeorges.nhs.uk.

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 on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

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 of 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.



