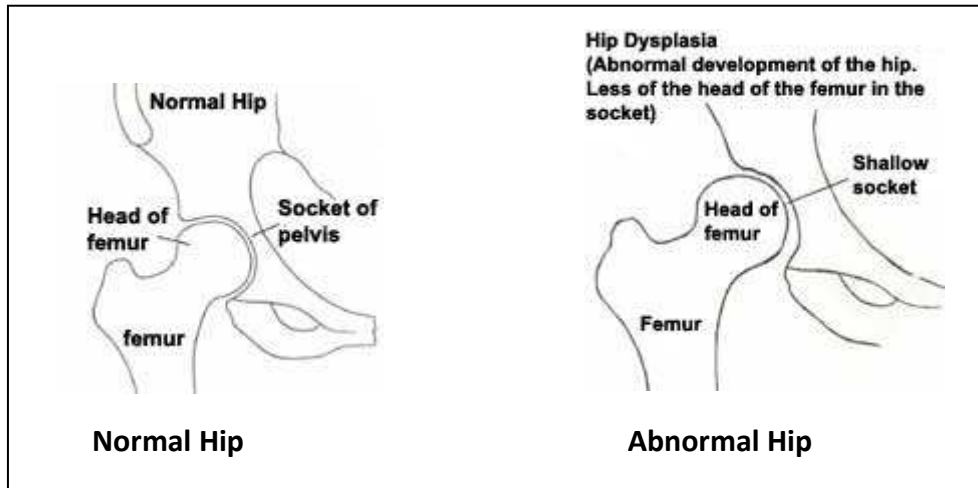


THE PAVLIK HARNESS – A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

What is Hip Dysplasia?



Hip dysplasia is a term used to describe hip problems in infants and in children, and is often present at birth. The most common terminology used to define hip dysplasia is listed below.

1. Developmental Hip Dislocation – the hip is clearly dislocated (outside the hip joint) but can be relocated within the socket.
2. Developmental Dislocatable Hip – the hip is in place, but dislocates fully when stressed.
3. Developmental Subluxable Hip – the hip is in place, but dislocates partially when stressed.
4. Acetabular Dysplasia – the hip socket is shallow and stays shallow so that the hip is unstable.

What does a Pavlik Harness look like?



Front view



Back view

The Pavlik Harness

The Pavlik Harness is used to help babies who have poorly developed hips. The harness looks complicated but it works in a simple, straightforward way. The harness will hold your baby's hips in an optimum position to facilitate development of the hip socket. The harness also prevents your baby's hip from moving into positions that may hinder development. In addition, the harness aims to prevent any further tendency for the hip to dislocate.

Your baby will wear the harness for a period determined by your doctor, most commonly 6 – 12 weeks. During this period the pavlik harness should NOT be removed. It is important that your baby wears the harness all the time, day and night. Your baby will have regular hip ultrasounds and be reviewed by your doctor throughout this treatment.

Most importantly, the harness will not hurt your baby. In fact, most babies adjust to wearing the harness very quickly, even if mum and dad take a little longer!

How can I bath my baby?

Because it's important not to remove the harness during treatment, your baby will require a sponge bath once a day instead of a full bath. A sponge bath is usually enough to keep your baby clean and sweet smelling. You may use a damp cloth to clean under the straps.

It is important to keep your baby and the harness dry. Pay particular attention to those difficult-to-get-to creases in the groin, in front of the hips, behind the knees, under the arm pits and under the shoulder straps. Moisturising lotion can be used if you think your baby's skin is becoming dry. Lotions or creams that absorb into the skin are better than those that stay on the surface. For this reason we don't recommend vaseline or oil based products.

If the harness becomes very dirty, please contact the orthotist/physiotherapist for instructions.

Weighing your baby

You will be asked by various health professionals for the weight of your baby during health checks. You will need to subtract the weight of the harness from your baby's weight. The harness weight varies according to size as follows:

Extra Small: 100 grams

Small or Medium: 125 grams

Large or Extra Large: 150 grams

Avoid having height checks for the period of your baby's treatment as straightening your baby's legs will bring the legs into a position which may risk hip dislocation.

Skin checks

Check under the straps regularly to assess the condition of your baby's skin and to make sure that there are no areas where the harness is causing pressure or redness. If red areas of skin persist, please contact the orthotist/physiotherapist for a review of the harness.

What about exercise for my baby?

The harness will still allow your baby to move freely and continue to develop. Your physiotherapist will provide you with specific activities to enhance development. Your baby should not be placed on his or her tummy or side, as this may compromise the development of the hip socket. Your physiotherapist will teach you how to modify your baby's tummy time so that your baby can still get the needed practice at using muscles in this position.

What will my baby wear?

We recommend that your baby wears clothing two sizes larger than usual over the pavlik harness. Any tight clothing which puts pressure on the straps at the hips should be avoided – for example clothing with an elasticised waist. We also recommend disposable nappies for the optimum fit of the harness.

Sleeping and play

Experts now recommend that all babies sleep on their backs and we recommend this for your baby. This is also the best position for play sessions. Try to avoid your baby sleeping on his or her side. Talk to your physiotherapist about how to provide modified tummy time whilst your baby is in the harness.

Carrying your baby?

When carrying your baby you will need to maintain your baby's hips in the "frog position" ie knees apart as held by the harness. Your physiotherapist will show you how to do this. A "Baby Bjorn" is a safe way to carry your baby, but your baby needs to be facing towards you with their knees against your chest to hold the "frog position" rather than facing away from you. A baby sling can push your baby's knees together and so this is not recommended.

Car travel

The normal recommended car restraints should be used.

Fitting the Pavlik Harness

The orthotist/physiotherapist will fit your baby's harness showing you what to look for. You will have a check one-week later and fortnightly thereafter. Sometimes parents have a concern about the harness before their appointment is due. You may feel it is not fitting correctly or is too dirty. Don't hesitate to contact the orthotist/physiotherapist if you have any concerns, as you may need an earlier appointment.



It's not easy to be told your baby requires a Pavlik Harness. But we hope that learning about hip dysplasia and how the harness can assist your baby's development will reassure you. We also hope this information is helpful to you and other family members. It's a good idea to show this brochure to grandparents and others who know your baby or who may care for your baby from time to time.

Babies tolerate the Pavlik Harness very well and get used to it very quickly. It should not hurt your baby. If your baby seems unsettled or unhappy check the other more usual causes for a crying baby. Is he or she hungry, wet or tired?

Best wishes to you and your baby.

Remember if there are any problems contact your orthotist/physiotherapist.

Orthotist

Name _____

Phone No: 9926 7467

Urgent: 9926 7111 and pager 45790

Physiotherapist

Name _____

Paediatrics: 9926 7555

Plaster Room: 9926 7331

Urgent: 9926 7111 and pager no. 41348