

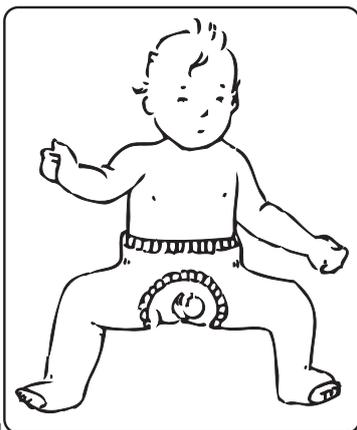
## Caring for your Child in a Hip-spica

This leaflet has been written to help you care for your child and keep them as comfortable as possible whilst he/she is in a hip-spica plaster. It should help relieve any concerns and anxieties you may have. You will be surprised at how quickly your child adapts to the hip-spica.

### What is a hip-spica?

A hip-spica is a plaster-of-paris cast which covers the child's lower limbs. It can be either:

- a) Frog plaster** - used in younger children and babies and consists of a plaster cast from below the nipple or waist line down both legs to the ankles. Sometimes a wooden bar is placed between the legs for support and to help maintain the position.



- b) One-and-a-half hip-spica** - used in older children where one of the legs is plastered to just below the knee.

### Handling and positioning

It can take up to three days for the plaster to dry, so care must be taken when moving your child. Use the palms of your hands to prevent indentations forming on the plaster. It is important to turn your child regularly to allow the plaster to dry out and to help prevent pressure sores from developing.

Your child can lay on his/her front using pillows or beanbags for support. You will be shown the best way to lift and move your child.

You should not use the wooden bar to lift your child. You will not cause your child any pain by lifting or moving him/her. Beanbags are ideal for your child to sit on.

### Toileting

The edges of the plaster around the child's genital area will be covered with a waterproof tape (sleek) which can be wiped with soap and water or baby wipes. You will be shown how to replace any tape that may become soiled or loose.

A small nappy can be tucked inside the plaster with a larger nappy on the outside. Regularly check the nappy and change if only slightly damp as this will help keep the plaster dry and the child's skin in good condition.

For older children, the use of a bedpan or urine bottle is advised as it is unlikely that they will be able to use a toilet.

### Washing and dressing

Give your child a daily wash, checking the skin for any pressure sores that may have developed from the plaster rubbing. Wash carefully around the nappy area, keeping it clean and dry. You can dress your child but you may need to adapt clothing and have a larger size.

### Sleeping

You will be shown how to support your child in bed with the help of pillows behind the back and under the legs.

The head of the cot/bed can be raised with bricks or books to aid urine to drain into the nappy away from the plaster.

## Pain control

Paracetamol (Calpol) and Ibuprofen (Junifen) will be adequate pain relief. Give these regularly for the first few days as instructed by your doctor.

## Transport

Your child may still fit into his/her pushchair. If not, a pillow can be placed under their bottom to raise them and the legs rest on the side of the pushchair. Alternatively, you may be able to borrow a wider chair from friends or family.

If your child will not fit into their car seat, again a rolled up towel can be placed under the bottom to lift them enough to allow the legs to rest on the edge of the car seat. The seat belt can still be fastened in the usual way.

## Possible complications

Complications may occur from the plaster. It is important to look for the following signs.

### 1. Circulation

Check your child's toes stay pink and warm. If they become swollen, cold and/or blue/white, seek help. Ensure your child can move their feet and toes freely.

### 2. Plaster care

If the plaster looks too tight or loose, becomes wet, soft or starts to crack or you notice an unpleasant smell, then seek help.

### 3. Skin

Check the plaster is not rubbing the skin, especially around the back and the ankles as this can develop into a sore. If the skin becomes broken, then seek help.

## 4. Other

If your child becomes irritable, appears to be in more pain or develops a temperature, then seek help.

**If you have any concerns about any of the above, then please contact:**

**Aftercare: 01392 403509**

*(during normal working hours)*

**Emergency Department: 01392 402309**

*(outside normal working hours)*

**Further Information: Steps charity [www.steps-charity.org.uk/](http://www.steps-charity.org.uk/)**

We hope this leaflet has helped you to care for your child. As you became more confident in handling your child in their hip-spica, you will soon find the best way of dealing with everyday activities.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

© Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust

Designed by Graphics (Print & Design), RD&E