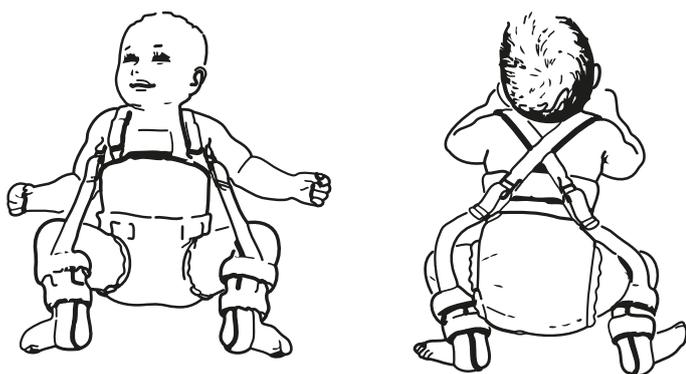


## Care of your Baby in the Pavlik Harness

The Pavlik harness is designed to gently position your baby's hips correctly. Both hips need to be positioned in the harness for it to work, even though your baby may only have a problem with one hip. The harness will help the hip joint develop normally.

You can see an explanation of this condition on page 3 of this leaflet.



### How to look after your baby in a Pavlik harness

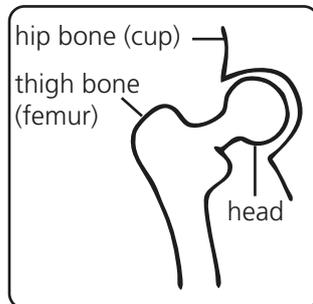
- Once fitted, the harness must NEVER be removed, even if it is soiled, unless directed by the Aftercare team or your consultant.
- Although the harness is a very safe way to treat your baby's hip problem, in rare cases it is possible for the femoral nerve to be temporarily compressed. For this reason it is very important that both legs are active and that your baby is kicking well.
- If your baby is not kicking, or seems to hold it's legs very still, you need to contact the Aftercare Department or your consultant the same day. If it is the weekend, loosen the leg straps down by a couple of cms. If after a few hours your baby does not start kicking, remove the harness completely and contact us as soon as possible.
- Each week or so the position of the harness will be checked by the Aftercare team and probably adjusted. This will allow for growth.
- The nappy should be worn in the normal way but must be worn beneath the leg straps. When changing the nappy, lift under your baby's bottom rather than by his/her feet.
- Each day it is important to check the knee creases, groin creases and sides of the neck for skin soreness.
- Generous sized clothing will avoid tightness around the hips.
- The Aftercare team will give advice on using your car seat. Try not to leave your baby in a car seat longer than necessary.
- **Positioning:** for sleeping place your baby on his/her back. For playing, lie your baby on his/her tummy, back or in a sitting position. Do not lie your baby on his/her side as it is not good for your baby's hips at this stage.
- Should the harness become soiled you can clean it by dampening it then applying detergent and scrubbing with a nail brush (but not removing the harness).
- Every few weeks an ultrasound scan will be done to check your baby's progress.
- When the hip joint becomes normal, as it does in most cases, you will be allowed to remove the harness. If this is to be done gradually, the Aftercare team will advise you. However, the consultant may be happy for you to take the harness off without weaning out of it gradually.

# How to look after your baby when the Pavlik harness is removed

- When your baby is out of the harness, encourage him/her to kick. An ideal time to do this is when your baby is in the bath.
- Do allow your baby to move freely and treat him/her as you normally would. There are no movements which you should prevent your baby from doing. He/she should start walking at the normal time.

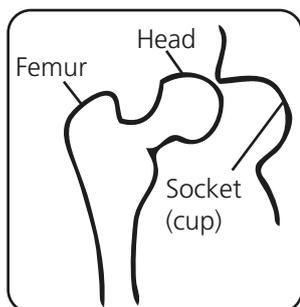
## Reasons for the use of the Pavlik harness

The normal hip joint is very similar in design to a ball and socket joint. In the young infant the hip bone ('the socket') forms a cup made of soft bone. The top of the thigh bone (femur) is similar in shape to a 'ball' and is made of cartilage. In order for the joint to develop normally it is important for the hip bone ('the socket') and the thigh bone ('the head') to fit together well.



The use of the Pavlik harness are as follows.

## Hip dysplasia

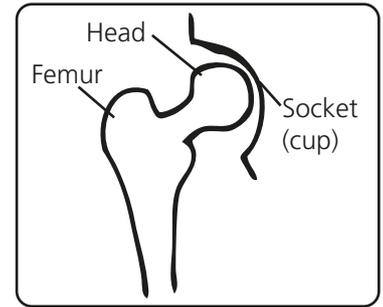


The term 'congenital' means that the problem was present at or before birth. The word 'dislocated' means that the top of the thigh bone ('the head') is not in the 'socket' of the hip joint. In a congenital dislocation of

the hip the 'head' is over the rim of the 'socket' as in the diagram. Congenital dislocation of the hip is normally picked up shortly after birth

when the doctor first examines your baby's hips. It is most common in girls, first born babies and breech deliveries.

The term 'hip dysplasia' means that the hip joint has not developed normally. The socket (cup) is usually shallow and this may lead to the head of the femur sliding in and out of the socket or, in some cases, can be dislocated.



This is normally picked up shortly after birth when the doctor first examines your baby's hips; it will then be arranged for your baby to be fitted with a Pavlik harness.

## Ultrasound

In infancy the hip joint is made of cartilage which does not show up on x-ray. Ultrasound examines the joint in such a way that a diagnostic picture is formed. Ultrasound will not harm your baby.

Following treatment, your baby's hip development will proceed as normal and will not affect the development of normal physical milestones.

There is an occasional need for further surgical treatment but in the majority cases, the Pavlik harness is all that is needed.

Your baby will be followed up one year after your treatment and then occasionally longer until it is clear that development is proceeding normally.

*If you have any questions about the harness or your baby's hip problem, please ask the Aftercare team or your consultant.*

**Aftercare: 01392 403509**

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.

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