

Patient Education



ARNOLD PALMER HOSPITAL
For Children
Supported by Arnold Palmer Medical Center Foundation

The Pediatric Orthopaedic Center
at Arnold Palmer Hospital
83 W. Columbia St. Orlando, FL 32806
321-841-3040 f:321-841-3049

Pavlik Harness

Goal/Purpose

Your baby is being placed in a Pavlik Harness to help treat the hip condition known as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH). The goal of this treatment is to keep the hips **flexed** and **abducted** in the frog-leg position for approximately six weeks of full-time wear, followed by part-time wear. This will encourage the development of the head of the femur (ball) to be rounded and fit into a well-formed acetabulum (socket).

Applying the Harness:

- The straps will be marked so you will know where to fasten them.
- The harness should be worn at all times, unless otherwise instructed.
- Lay out the harness and then place your baby on the harness. Bring the **chest** strap under the arms and across the nipple line. Leave room for two fingers to rotate under this strap.
- Fasten the **shoulder** straps (crossed in the back) up over each shoulder. Leave room under the top of each shoulder strap for one finger.
- Place the feet in the **booties** and fasten the top strap just under the knee. Fasten the bottom strap leaving room for one finger under each strap. Fasten the flexion straps (pulls knees up). The strap and the buckle are colored coded to match: red to red; blue to blue. Pull the strap up to the line marked by the doctor and fasten. Next fasten the abduction strap (pulls the legs apart and to the side) to the appropriate mark.

Check daily for fit:

- Check the harness fit when the baby is calm. You should be able to place one finger under the shoulder strap, two fingers under the chest strap and one finger under the bootie straps.
- Do not adjust the straps further than the mark made by the physician or nurse. After feeding the baby, loosen the chest strap and be sure that it is not interfering with the baby's breathing. Loosen the chest strap immediately if your baby's breathing is restricted. Remember to return to the mark later.
- Observe the feet and legs for movement. If something does not look right or if there is not complete movement of the legs, remove the harness and call your nurse.

Bathing:

- Your doctor may allow you to remove your baby's harness for 30 minutes daily for a bath. If not, bring fresh clothing and you may bathe your baby at the hospital during your next visit. Your baby should be able to straighten her legs and kick easily when out of the harness.

Diapering:

- Lift by sliding your hand under the hips; do not lift by the feet.
- Clean and dry thoroughly, especially in the skin folds.
- Avoid powder and lotions as they may cake in the skin folds and cause a sore.

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- Always fasten the diaper **under** the harness straps.
- With every diaper change, gently massage the area around the baby's knees and ensure the felt is between the buckle and baby's skin at the knee to prevent redness or pressure.

Washing the Harness

- Wash by hand with a mild detergent.
- Allow to drip-dry; do not place in the dryer.

Dressing:

- A T-shirt or onesie should be worn under the harness. It is important that there are no wrinkles in the clothing as wrinkles can cause skin irritation and possibly a sore.
- When changing a shirt, remove only the chest strap and shoulder straps of the harness.
- Loose-fitting clothes, such as long gowns or a dress will fit over the harness.
- Loose-fitting socks without tight elastic may be worn over the harness in cooler weather.
- Wearing a bib will help keep the harness and T-shirt clean.

Comfort and Movement

- Your baby should sleep on her back. You may place a rolled up towel or baby blanket to hold your baby on her back.
- Continue to hold and cuddle your baby just like you did before the harness was worn. Hold in a comfortable position without forcing the legs together.
- Check to make sure that foot, leg and toe movement is normal.
- The harness will not interfere with sitting in a car seat
- The harness does not cause pain but may be uncomfortable at first. It may take two to three days for your baby to adjust. If you are concerned, please call your nurse.
- Do not swaddle the baby when in the Pavlik Harness.

Call your doctor or nurse if:

- Your baby does not move legs, feet or toes.
- Your baby does not move her arms.
- Your baby does not straighten her legs and kick when out of the harness.
- You are uncertain of the harness position or need help putting it back on after removal.
- You have any questions or concerns.

Your nurse is:

_____ Phone: _____

Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.