

Caring for your child in a Pavlik Harness

What is the purpose of the harness?



Your child may need a Pavlik Harness to treat a dislocated hip or Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH).

The harness keeps your child's hips and legs in a position that allows the affected hip joint to stay in the correct position for healing. Your child will still be able to move his or her legs, which helps in the treatment.

To work properly, the harness must stay on all day and night.

How do I care for my child?

You will need to learn how to care for your child without taking off the harness. The harness keeps your child's hips and knees flexed at 90° at all times. This position is necessary for your child's hip(s) to heal properly.

Do not move the harness during diaper changes. Dress your child in loose clothing over the harness. Do not 'bundle' or wrap a blanket around your child.

Ask the doctor if the harness may be removed for a bath. If your child's harness should not be removed, give your child a sponge bath. Try not to soak the straps of the harness. After you dry the skin, you may put a little cornstarch under the straps.

Keep your child on his or her tummy or back. While your child is awake, alternate his or her positions from back to tummy and so on. If you are breastfeeding, make sure the way you hold your child keeps the hips and knees in the correct position.

Each day, check the skin along the edges of the harness for redness, which is a sign of pressure. You also need to check your child's feet. This takes 2 people. One person holds your child's legs in the correct position. The other person removes the booties of the harness to check your child's feet for any signs that the harness is too tight (see signs below).

How long will my child need the harness?

Your child will need to wear the harness all day and night, for 6 to 8 weeks. Then, a splint may be used at night to guide the development of the hip as your child sleeps. During this time, your child will have many appointments at the hospital to make sure that the equipment fits and is being used properly, and to check your child's progress. The Pavlik Harness comes in different sizes. As your child grows, the harness may be adjusted or changed.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor if you notice the harness becomes too tight or too loose.

Signs that the harness is too tight:

- bluish or cold feet
- swollen toes
- red marks on the skin
- your child is not able to move his or her toes

Your child's doctor: _____

Phone number: **905-521-2100**, ext _____