

Pavlik Harness



Purpose of the Pavlik Harness

The Pavlik Harness is designed to assist with treatment of Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH). DDH is an abnormal development of the hip joint, in which the head of the thigh bone (Femur) is not stable within the hip joint (Acetabulum).

DDH is a common condition and occurs in approximately 2-3 out of every 1,000 infants. The condition is not painful in infants and young children, however if left untreated it will cause pain and complications later in life.

The purpose of the Pavlik Harness is to hold your child's legs in the best position for proper development and strengthening of the hip joint. The harness has fabric straps and fasteners that fit around your baby's chest, shoulders and legs to hold the legs in a spread position with knees bent and thighs out to the sides.

Specific Operating Instructions

- A Pavlik Harness is usually fitted soon after birth and will be worn for about 12 weeks
- The Pavlik Harness will be fitted by an orthotist or orthopaedic surgeon, and will initially remain on your child 24 hours a day without removal. As your child progresses the surgeon may indicate that the brace can be removed for periods of time each day
- It typically takes babies a couple of days to get used to the harness. Some babies may cry a little or seem unsettled for the first couple of nights. This is completely normal and is mostly due to not being able to kick. This should settle down after a few days.

Pavlik Harness Fitting

Adjusting a Pavlik

The harness will be fitted with adequate room for feeding and deep breathing, however as your child grows; the harness will need to be adjusted.



The harness should be fitted so that two fingers can fit underneath the chest strap after a feed. If you cannot fit two fingers underneath the chest strap, loosen slightly or contact your orthotist for an adjustment.

Take note of the position of the hips in the harness. As your child grows the leg straps will need to be lengthened to maintain the correct hip position. For this reason, do not cut excess material off the straps – fold over and secure with tape.

Hygiene

As the harness is to remain on your child at all times, it cannot be removed for bathing so your child will need to be sponge bathed. Please try to keep the harness dry when possible.

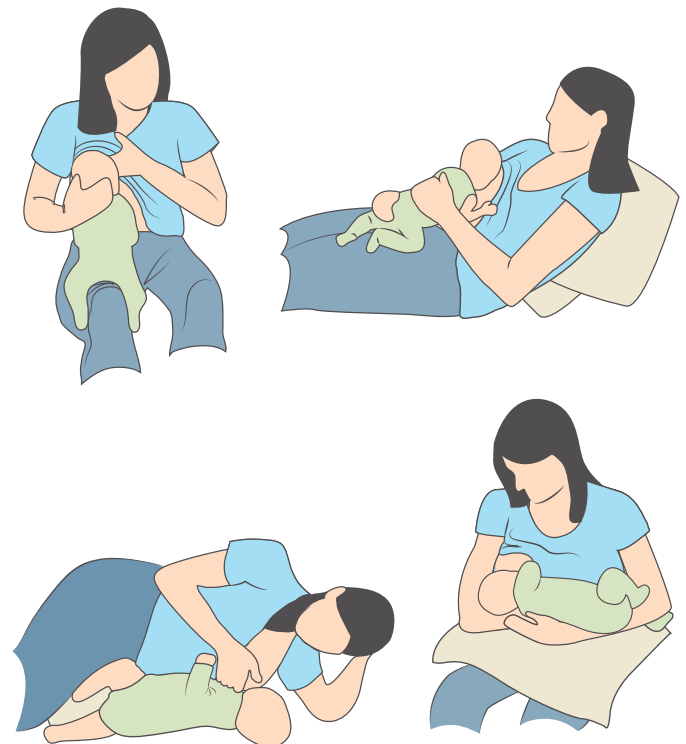
- When bathing your child, pay particular attention to the creases behind the knees, thighs and at the hips as these areas can often become irritated if not cleaned regularly. Dry these areas well after cleaning
- Your baby can wear normal nappies under the Harness. When changing your child's nappy, do not hold your baby's feet together as this will put their hips into the wrong position
- You will find most of your baby's clothes fit over the harness comfortably. Loose fitting clothes are desirable as they do not alter leg position. Socks or booties can be fitted over the foot pieces of the harness
- If necessary, the harness can be spot cleaned with a wet cloth. Place a cloth under the brace and rub from over the top. Do not remove the harness for cleaning unless told to do so by the surgeon.

Positioning

As we are trying to keep your babies legs apart, it is important to consider this when holding and positioning your child.

- Your baby will be sleeping on their back with the harness on. It is important to change your child's head position to avoid them favouring one side, or developing a flat spot
- Supervised tummy time is very useful when they are awake to encourage good neck and head control. You can prop a pillow under the baby's front to encourage the hips to remain in the correct position
- A good tip when handling your baby is to keep your hand between their legs to keep them apart
- You will be able to continue breastfeeding while your baby is wearing the harness. You will need to find a position that is comfortable for both you and your baby, while keeping the legs apart.

Below are some examples of positions you could try when breastfeeding.



Checklist

- Always try to keep your baby's legs apart
- Maintain hygiene with particular attention to behind the knees and in hip creases
- Do not remove the Harness to clean – spot clean only
- Monitor the fit of the harness. Ensure there is enough space for two fingers to fit under the chest strap
- When your baby is weighed, remember to deduct this amount to gain an accurate record.

Pavlik Harness Size and Brand

Pavlik Harness Weight

Image References

Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne

www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/education-training/what-is-developmental-dysplasia-of-the-hip/

TS Ortho and Surgical

<https://tsorthosurgical.com/product/pavlik-harness/>

Risks involved with incorrect use of the harness

- Incorrect use of the Pavlik Harness may lead to delayed healing or risk of further injury.

For outpatient appointments

Prosthetic and Orthotic Services

Kirwan Health Campus
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