



Parent Information Sheet: Developmental Dysplasia of the Hips (DDH)

What is developmental dysplasia of the hip?

Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) is a relatively common abnormality of the hip joint. In hip dysplasia, the hip socket (acetabulum) is too shallow and/or the ligaments are too loose. This allows the ball part of the thigh bone (femoral head) to slip partially or completely in and out of the hip socket.

Who is at risk for DDH?

Though DDH can occur in any newborn or child, the risk is higher for:

- breech babies – whose position tends to strain the hip joint ligaments
- babies and children with a parent or sibling who had DDH
- females - who have looser ligaments than males
- first-born babies – whose fit in the womb is tighter

How is DDH diagnosed?

Your baby's pediatric provider examines the hips using maneuvers that test for DDH in the newborn period and at regular checkups over the first several months.

If the exam is abnormal, how will my baby be followed?

Depending on the exam, your baby will be followed with regular hip exams by his/her PCP or will be referred to an Orthopedist (bone and joint specialist) for more evaluation of the hips. This will include an ultrasound of the hips and possibly treatment with a special canvas harness (Pavlik harness).

Will my baby be okay?

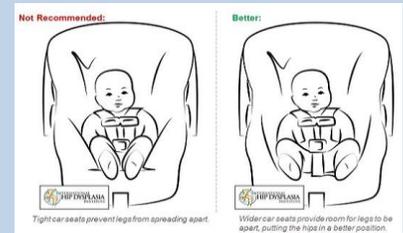
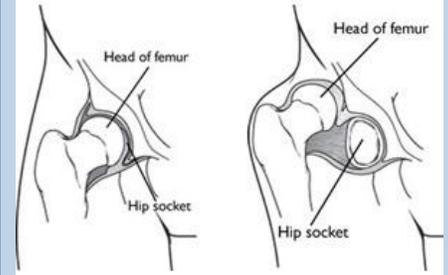
Early treatment and follow-up of DDH corrects the hip abnormalities and enables the bones to grow normally in the vast majority of children – so they can walk, play, grow and be active in their lives. Diagnosing and treating your child's DDH in infancy greatly increases the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Is there anything I can do for my baby to prevent mild DDH from getting worse?

Even with a normal hip exam at birth, DDH may develop during childhood, especially during the first year of life. The best prevention is to pay close attention to the position of the hips if you swaddle your baby in a blanket for comfort. It's important to leave the hips bent up (flexed) as if the baby is still in the womb and to avoid straightening of the hips (extension) when you swaddle your baby. With hips in the flexed position, swaddling is safe for normal hip development. For sleep, sleep sacks are very good as they allow the baby to have a natural positioning of the hips (no straightening can occur with sleep sacks that may occur with tight swaddling).

Helpful Tips and Information

Pediatric DDH



Example of baby in Pavlik Harness

