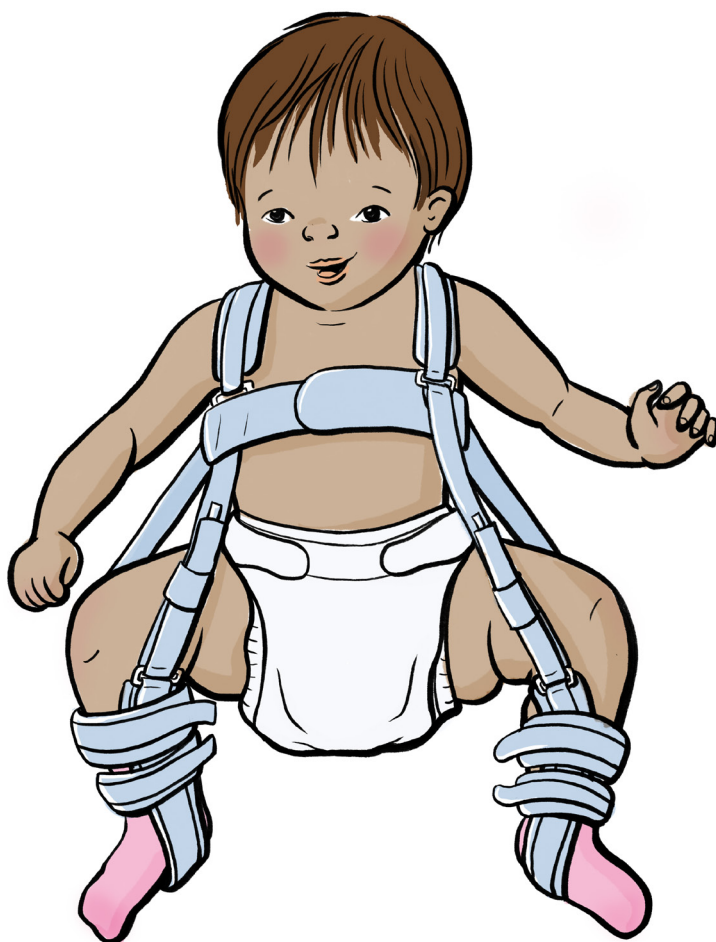
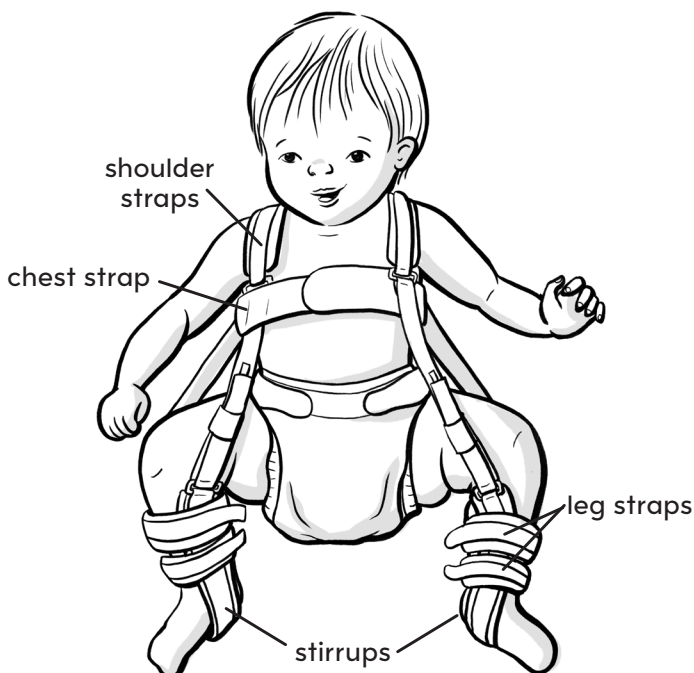


Pavlik Harness



What is a Pavlik Harness?

A **Pavlik Harness** is a lightweight soft fabric brace used for babies with a hip disorder or femur fracture. The harness has a chest strap, two shoulder straps and leg straps which attach to little stirrups/booties to keep the hips and knees bent with the legs apart. This position helps the bones or joints to heal and develop normally.



Wearing the Pavlik Harness

Your orthopaedic doctor, nurse specialist or clinic nurse will apply the harness and teach you how to open and close the shoulder, chest and leg straps.

The straps will be marked to keep them in correct positions.

Adjustments are made as needed at follow-up appointments.

Do not adjust the straps without advice from your doctor or nurse specialist.

Your doctor will tell you if you may remove the harness. **Do not take the harness off** unless your doctor tells you may remove it.

How long your baby will have to wear the harness depends on severity of your baby's hip condition or fracture. To treat hip condition, your baby is likely to wear the harness for 12 weeks.

Care at home

The chest strap should be firm, but you should be able to **fit two to three fingers** underneath it. If the chest strap looks tight after your baby eats, you can loosen it a bit. Make it snug again when the chest strap no longer seems tight.

The leg straps should be firm enough to hold your baby's feet, but not too tight. You should be able to fit one finger underneath each strap. It can take a few days for your baby to get used to the harness. Your baby may seem unsettled and cry a bit, but this should settle within a couple of days.

Nappies and clothing

Loose fitting clothing using stretchy material and larger sizes can be worn over the Pavlik harness, don't use clothing that brings baby's knees together. Socks can be worn over the stirrups/booties, toddler size socks usually fit well over the legs.

If you are swaddling your baby, **do not swaddle your baby's legs.**

To change a nappy, lift your baby from under the buttocks or thighs and slide the nappy under. **Avoid pulling up the legs.** Place nappy under the straps to keep the harness clean and to keep the legs in correct position.

Bathing/Skin care

Check your baby's skin every day. Give your baby a sponge bath with the harness in place and take care to clean baby's skin creases and take note of any redness or skin irritation. When sponge bathing, open one strap at a time.

It is best not to use powders or creams under the harness. You can continue using your usual nappy cream and lotions on other skin areas.

Out and about

Your baby should fit to the usual car seat and buggy without any problems. Occupational therapist review can be arranged if required. Long journeys are not recommended.

Sleeping

Your baby will need to sleep on their back in the harness. If you are using a baby sleeping bag, you may need bag in a larger size to fit comfortably over the harness.

Feeding

If you are breastfeeding, you will be able to continue while your baby is using Pavlik harness. You may need to try different positions until you will find a way which is comfortable for you both. You could try curling up next to your baby, under arm “rugby hold” or using a breastfeeding pillow to support your baby.

Feeding may take bit longer than usual and your baby may need to wind more frequently.



Positioning

Supervised tummy time is important even when your baby is wearing Pavlik harness. Tummy time decreases the risk of developing flat spot on baby's head, promote body stability, limb co-ordination and head control. A rolled up towel or small pillow can be used to support your child's legs and/or under their chest.

Potential problems

Femoral nerve palsy is a very rare problem that can happen using a harness. If your baby stops kicking, contact your nurse specialist or orthopaedic outpatient clinic as soon as possible.

Follow up

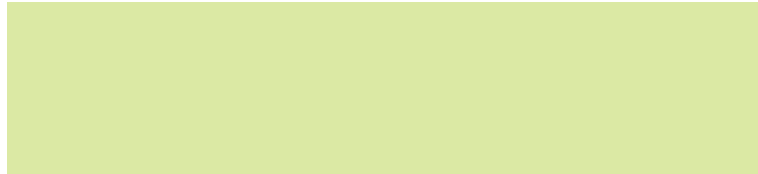
Your baby will have regular follow-up appointments with your orthopaedic doctor to monitor the progress and adjust the harness as required. Your baby may need ultrasound scans (USS) or x-rays during the visits.

Contact hospital if:

- Your baby stops kicking.
- Your baby's feet are swollen or puffy, even after loosening the leg straps.
- The harness seems too small or is not keeping the legs apart and knees bent.
- You notice any skin irritation, redness or rash.

If you have any concerns please contact us

**Your Nurse
Specialist:**



Clinic Hours (8.30am-5.00pm)

Please call and leave a message
for the Paediatric Orthopaedic
Outpatient Clinic Nurses on:
(09) 307 4949 ext 22537

After Clinic Hours

Please visit:
Starship Childrens Emergency
Department, Level 2
Starship Childrens Hospital