

Developmental Dysplasia of the Hips

Information for parents

Ashford Hospital London Road, Ashford, Middlesex, TW15 3AA

Telephone 01784 884488 Facsimile 01784 884017

St. Peter's Hospital Guildford Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 0PZ

Telephone 01932 872000 Facsimile 01932 874757

PATIENT INFORMATION

WHY ARE BABIES HIPS CHECKED AT BIRTH?

All babies should be examined in the first few days after birth and this includes an examination of the hips. The hips are then checked again by the GP between six to eight weeks of age. The examination is to look for a condition called 'Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip' (DDH). Some babies are at more risk of developing DDH than others and these cases will be referred for an ultrasound test even if the examination is normal.

HOW ARE THE HIPS CHECKED?

At the first check, the baby's hips will be tested by lying the baby on his or her back and moving the hips gently outwards. A distinctive clunk suggests a possible abnormality. The head of the thigh bone moving in and out of the socket can cause a 'clicky' sound. A clicky hip is usually normal but will still be referred.

WHAT CAUSES DDH?

Some babies are born with dislocatable or unstable hips. We don't fully understand the reason for this but are aware of the risk factors for DDH.

These include:

1. Genetic factors (so there may be a family history)
2. Factors related to your baby's development before birth (e.g. breech presentation in the last part of pregnancy)

Babies with risk factors will be referred on for an ultrasound of the hips as an out-patient even if the examination is normal. For those who have strong risk factors or an abnormal examination such as a distinctive 'clunk' on examination an out-patient appointment will be arranged soon after referral.

For all normal examinations and other risk factors, an appointment will be made for four to six weeks time from referral. You should care for your baby as usual including changing his or her nappy normally.

MANAGEMENT OF DDH

If a problem is identified by ultrasound, you will see an Orthopaedic specialist as an out-patient. The Orthopaedic team will discuss with you the various treatment options. Whilst waiting for your appointment, no special precautions need to be taken.

DDH is not uncomfortable or painful for your baby. You can care for your baby as usual including changing his or her nappy normally.

If a referral has been made to the Orthopaedic unit and you have not received an appointment after two weeks, please contact the telephone number below:

Rowley Bristow Orthopaedic Clinic appointments:

01932 722 730

Author:	Dr Peter Reynolds
Department:	Paediatrics
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