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design by Medical Illustration

Information for patients Care of your Hip Spica



Alice Ward



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Once your child is fit and well and you are confident and happy caring for your child in their plaster spica, you will be able to go home. This booklet will assist you in caring for your child effectively.

How do I care for my child's skin?

It is important that the nappy area is washed and dried between changes and following toileting of the older child. Appropriate creams may be applied to any rashes.

Try to avoid nursing your child tilted head down. This position allows urine to soak up the plaster and can cause urine burns to develop on the child's body under the plaster. Also try to ensure that your child does not push small toys or objects, e.g. Lego, inside the plaster, these can cause pressure sores to develop under the plaster.

If your child develops a bad nappy rash this may be due to the plaster being very wet, please contact the ward for advice (contact number can be found at the end of this leaflet). It is very important that your child's position is changed frequently to avoid pressure sores developing under the plaster. Please ensure your child spends equal times on their front and back during every 24hr period.

The spica cast we use at RJAH is made of water resistant material which means you may be able to bath or shower your child. If there are any surgical wounds you will need to wait about 2 weeks before doing this to allow time for them to heal. Further information regarding these casts will be given prior to discharge.

Notes:

Contact Numbers

Alice Ward - **01691 404444** (24 hours)

Children's Outpatients (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) - **01691 404510**

'**STEPS**' (support group for families of children with lower limb disorders) - **01925 750271**

Perthes Association (support group for families of children with Perthes Disease) - **01483 306637**

What food should my child eat?

A normal diet may be given, but be careful to prevent excessive weight gain. Add plenty of fluids, roughage and fruit to prevent constipation. Try to prevent crumbs from dropping down inside the plaster. Contact your GP if you are concerned that your child might be constipated.

What clothes are suitable?

A variety of clothing may be worn over the plaster e.g. dresses, shirts and skirts. Pants and shorts can be split down the seams and hook and loop fasteners or ties applied to aid fastening.

How do I toilet my child?

Nappies can be used but need to be in two sizes, a small one for against the skin and a much larger one to fit around the outside of the plaster, the smaller one will need to be changed more frequently than normal.

If your child is toilet trained nappies should not be used as a potty/bed pan will be needed. Boys will also need a plastic urine bottle. Both these items can easily be purchased.

How mobile will my child be?

Mobility will be very restricted and this is the purpose of the plaster spica, however please ensure you keep the sides of the cot up when your child is not supervised and use a harness when your child is in a pushchair. You will be surprised how quickly they do learn to move in this plaster. The best way to get them out and about is in a pushchair or wheelchair dependant on the size of your child. If you need to borrow a reclining wheelchair to accommodate your child in plaster, please ask a member of staff. Please do bring in your own pushchair as it may still be of use.

Car seats often pose a problem due to the size and shape of the plaster. We do have some information on car seats which may be of use, please ask if you wish to see it.

Hospital transport may be provided to take your child home if a suitable car seat has not been obtained. This will be on a stretcher in an ambulance which does cost the hospital considerably so it is preferable for a car seat to be sourced if possible please.

Further information can be found on the 'Steps' website:
www.stepsworldwide.org

What are spasms?

These are caused by sudden contraction of the muscles around the operation site. They are nature's way of protecting a diseased or injured part of the body but unfortunately can be painful and distressing. Not everyone seems to be troubled by spasms and those that are appear to vary greatly as regards their severity and frequency, although many are more bothered by them at night.

Medication can be given to relax the muscles. General mind and body relaxation techniques are helpful too, as may be a change of position.