

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: USING A PAVLIK HARNESS

The Pavlik™ harness is a device with a set of soft straps that hold a baby's legs apart with the knees bent. It is usually used for babies with hip dysplasia but it can also be used to treat femur fractures (broken thigh bones) in babies under 6 months. At this age, bones are softer and can heal, reshape and remodel completely.

### How do I care for the Pavlik™ harness?

Your doctor, nurse practitioner or clinic nurse has applied the Pavlik™ harness and adjusted the straps to keep your child's legs in the best position. We have marked the straps so you'll be able to fasten them again if the harness needs to come off.

**Front leg straps:** control how much your baby can flex the hips (flexion).

**Back leg straps:** control how much your baby can open the hips (abduction).

**Please do not adjust or remove the harness unless you check with your doctor or nurse practitioner first.**

### Cleaning

Only clean the harness when it gets dirty. If your baby must wear the harness for 24 hours per day you may only spot clean the straps with a baby wipe or a cloth with gentle detergent.

### How do I care for my child?

#### Clothing and bathing

A harness prescribed for 24-hour use must be placed directly on your baby's bare skin. Fortunately, the harness is designed so you can change your baby's diaper without removing it.

Helpful tips:

- Ensure the harness is placed underneath all clothing. This allows you to remove the clothes for washing.



- Use larger, loose fitting clothes that can easily fit over the harness. A sleeper that is a few sizes bigger will work well, or a large sleep sack can be worn at night.
- Avoid putting pants or shorts on your baby.
- Avoid tub baths. You must sponge bathe your baby with the harness on. Try your best to keep the harness material dry to prevent skin irritation.

If your baby can come out of the harness for one hour each day (ask your doctor), your baby can wear an undershirt under the harness. You can change the undershirt every day when the harness is off. You can also use this “harness free” time for bathing and other activities.

### Daily checks

It's important to check your baby every day to see if there is any redness, rashes, irritation or open cuts on the skin. Be sure to check behind the knees, the groin creases and the sides of the neck. If you notice any irritation you can treat it like a diaper rash and use any zinc based cream. Ensure the creases are always dry to prevent skin irritation.

It is also important to ensure your child is moving both of their legs regularly. They should be kicking on their own or in response to your touch. Please check this once per day.

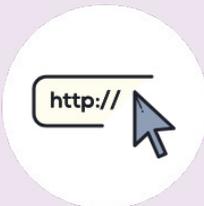
If your child develops open sores from the harness or has stopped moving their legs; please call the orthopedic nurse practitioner.

### Playtime

Your child will still be able to play and do tummy time with the harness on. Older children will learn to crawl with the harness as well. The harness will not prevent normal development.

### Questions?

Please call the orthopedic nurse practitioner:  
Available Monday to Friday, 8:00 am- 4:00 pm  
613-737-7600 x3556



### Need more information?

[Cheo.on.ca](http://cheo.on.ca) is the best place to find information on CHEO's programs and services and learn about a variety of health topics for children and youth. Visit our online resource section to access CHEO-recommended websites, books, apps, videos and more!