



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Information sheet for babies with potential developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH)

Issued by antenatal and newborn screening

**This leaflet is designed for the parents of babies born with potential developmental dysplasia of the hip. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a nurse practitioner, midwife or doctor.**

## **What is developmental dysplasia of the hip?**

- DDH is a condition where the ball and socket of the hip joint fail to develop normally.
- It can occur before birth or in the first few months of life.
- In DDH, the socket of the hip joint is usually shallow and the ball (top of the thigh bone) can be lying partly or completely outside the socket (the hip is then called subluxated or dislocated).
- About 2 in every 1000 babies born in the UK have DDH.

## **Why do we screen for DDH?**

All babies in the UK have their hips examined at birth, at 6 weeks, at 8 months and when they are two years old. Although normal examinations do not completely exclude the condition they increase the likelihood of DDH being identified early.

If left untreated the child will develop a limp when learning to walk, a painful hip in teenage years and severe arthritis in adult life.

**It is therefore important to detect and treat the condition as early as possible.**

## Ultrasound scan of the hips

If your baby's hip is felt to be dislocated or loose when checked at birth, an ultrasound scan of the hip will be done between 4-6 weeks old.

Some babies whose hips are found to be normal may still need an ultrasound scan between 4-6 weeks old if they have an increased risk of DDH.

## Why might my baby be at greater risk of DDH?

Your baby is at a greater risk of DDH if:

- A parent, brother or sister of the baby has a history of hip problems in early life. **Not clicky hips.**
- The baby was breech (feet or bottom first) at 36 weeks of pregnancy irrespective of presentation at delivery and how they were delivered.
- Breech at delivery if earlier than 36 weeks.
- If the baby is a twin and the baby's twin was breech.
- Most hip problems improve within the first 2 or 3 weeks without any treatment. If the hip remains unstable and/or the socket develops imperfectly your baby will require treatment to avoid problems in later life. It is therefore **very important that you attend your baby's ultrasound appointment.**

**If you don't attend the appointment, a new appointment will have to be made, and time may be lost in starting important treatment.** Delays in starting treatment may lead to further complications for your baby.

## When will I be given the results of the ultrasound scan?

If the scan is normal you will receive a letter within 7 working days. 'normal' means that your baby needs no further treatment.

If the scan shows that further scans or treatment is required you will be sent an appointment to see a specialist paediatric orthopaedic, (children's bone) doctor at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle.

### **Please do not worry if your baby is referred.**

The first line treatment for DDH is the use of a Velcro splint to hold the hips in the correct position. This is initially used for 6 weeks. Further ultrasound will be done to check the hip development and to advise the specialist on when the splint should be removed. The orthopaedic team will supervise the application of the splint to ensure it fits properly and accommodates your baby's growth.

### **Further information on DDH is available on the following websites:**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/developmental-dysplasia-of-the-hip/>

STEPS <https://www.stepsworldwide.org/> are a national charity supporting children and adults affected by a lower limb condition.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's screening ultrasound test for hip dysplasia, please contact the neonatal nurse consultant for Northumbria Healthcare Trust on 0191 607 2317.**







## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Text: 07815 500015

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

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