

Let's Talk About...

Caring for Your Child in a Pavlik Harness

What is a Pavlik harness?

The Pavlik [PAV-lik] harness is a brace that is commonly used for babies who have hip dysplasia [dis-PLAY-zhuh]. Hip dysplasia is when the bones of the hip joint don't fit together the way they should. The Pavlik harness keeps your baby's hips and knees gently bent and their thighs spread apart. This helps their hip joints grow and develop normally. The harness may also be used for babies with a broken leg.

Will my baby be uncomfortable?

No, the Pavlik harness is not painful or uncomfortable. Your baby may be unsettled for a few days while they get used to wearing the harness.

What should my baby wear under the harness?

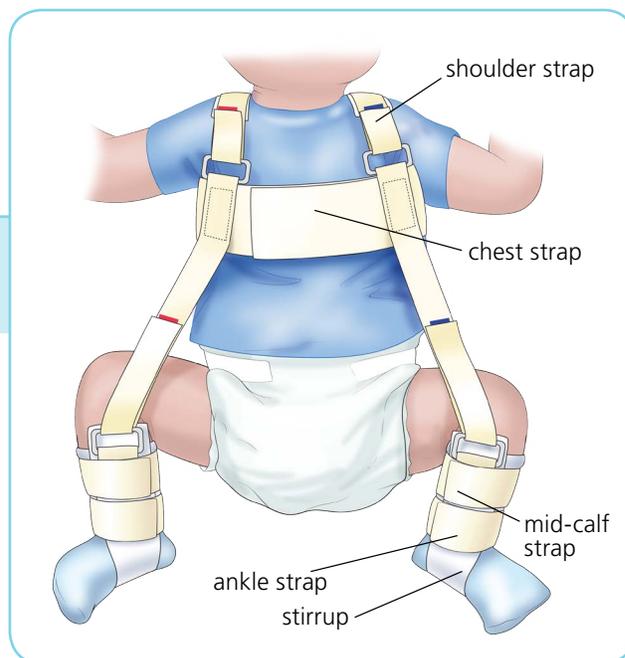
Under the harness your baby should wear:

- A diaper
- A onesie
- Long, loose socks that go up to the knees. The socks will protect the skin on your baby's feet and legs.

How do I put the harness on my baby?

Follow these steps to put the harness on and adjust it to fit:

- 1 Find the top and bottom of the harness. Lay it on a safe flat surface.
- 2 Extend the Velcro straps away from the chest strap.
- 3 Lay your child on their back (facing you) on top of the harness.
- 4 Adjust the chest strap first.
 - The chest strap should be in line with your baby's nipples.
 - You should be able to fit 2 of your fingers under the chest strap when it is fastened.
- 5 Bring the shoulder straps over your baby's shoulders. Attach the shoulder straps to the chest strap.
- 6 Place your child's heel in the stirrup and fasten the ankle strap and mid-calf strap. Do the same with the other foot.
- 7 Make sure the straps are adjusted correctly.
 - Your child's doctor will mark the straps so you know how far to adjust them.
 - Do not adjust the straps differently without talking to your child's doctor first.



How do I take the harness off?

Do not remove the harness unless your child's doctor or nurse tells you to.

If your doctor says it's okay, follow these steps to take off your baby's harness:

- 1 Place your child on their back on a safe flat surface.
- 2 Undo the shoulder straps one at a time and extend them over your child's head.
- 3 Open the chest, foot, and calf Velcro tabs and move each piece away from your child's body.
- 4 Lift your child's feet out of the booties without undoing the hip straps.
- 5 Leave the harness on the flat surface until you are ready to put your child back in the harness.

What are some important tips?

- Check your baby's skin for irritation each day. Pay special attention to skin folds and the skin under the straps. If you see skin irritation, such as redness or signs of skin breakdown, call your child's doctor.
- Do not take the harness off your child to give them a bath. Instead, give your baby sponge baths.
- You do not need to take the harness off to change your baby's diaper. Just fasten the diaper tapes under the straps. Remember to check the harness adjustment each time you change your child's diaper.

What type of clothing can my baby wear over a Pavlik harness?

Any loose clothing that fits over the harness is okay. Some examples are:

- 1-piece sleepers without feet
- Some dresses
- Roomy polo shirts or T-shirts
- Pants or gowns that do not keep your baby from moving

Do I need to limit my baby's activities while they wear the harness?

No. You don't need to stop your baby from moving around as long as the harness is in place and your baby's thighs stay apart.

Can I use my regular car seat while my child is in the Pavlik harness?

Yes. The safest way for your child to travel in a car is in a car seat that is right for their age and weight. Your baby's legs may press on the sides of the seat, but the harness will still work and your baby will be safe riding in the car.

How do I clean my baby's Pavlik harness?

You can clean the harness while your baby is wearing it using a damp washcloth or a toothbrush with soap and water. Pat it dry with a towel or blow it dry with a hair dryer on the cool setting.

If your child's doctor says it's okay to take the harness off, you may wash it in a washing machine on the delicate cycle and let it air dry. Do not put the harness in a dryer.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your child's doctor if you notice any of the following:

- Your baby cannot kick their legs.
- Your baby's feet are swollen or puffy, even after you loosen the Velcro straps.
- The harness seems too small.
- Your baby's skin looks red or raw or they have a rash.
- You are having problems adjusting to your child wearing a harness and you would like to talk to someone.

What should I do if I have a problem and can't reach my child's doctor?

If it is an emergency, go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call 911.

If it's not an emergency and you can't reach your child's doctor or nurse because their office is closed, call the operator at Primary Children's Hospital at 801-662-1000. Ask for the pediatric orthopedist. You can reach them at any time.

When do I need to make a follow-up appointment?

Call your child's doctor as soon as possible for a follow-up appointment. Your baby may need to see their doctor every few weeks while they are wearing the harness. They will be checked at clinic visits and with imaging studies, such as x-rays or ultrasound exams.

When can my baby stop wearing the harness?

Your doctor will tell you when you may start taking the harness off and how many hours each day your baby should wear it.

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