

- ▶ You can use disposable or cloth diapers. It is easier to cover cloth diapers with plastic pants that snap on the side, rather than the pull-on type.

## How Do I Clean the Harness?

- ▶ Until your baby is able to come out of the harness, try to protect the harness from being soiled or spat upon. Wipe any soiled spots with a damp cloth and blot dry.
- ▶ Once your doctor tells you that your baby is able to come out of the harness, you can hand wash or wash on the gentle cycle in the washing machine. Use low heat in the dryer. You can use a hairdryer to dry it more quickly. Make sure you can still see the markings on the straps before you take the harness off. Mark where one strap connects or crosses another. Use ink that won't wash out. The marks will show you where to place the straps when you put the harness back on.
- ▶ Ask the clinic nurse how to support your baby's legs when your child is out of the harness. Use three layers of diapers to support the legs in a good position while you wash the harness. Some parents are able to have someone wash and dry the harness while they bathe baby. The harness can then go back on right after the bath.

## Can My Baby Travel in a Standard Car Seat?

Yes, newborns are safe in a standard car seat.

## How Long Will My Child Wear a Harness?

Each child will wear the harness for a different length of time. It depends on the child's age and the condition of the hip joint. Discuss this with your doctor.

Once your baby is finished using the harness, you may be able to donate it back to the Orthopedic Clinic. Talk to the Orthopedic Clinic Nurse about donating your harness.

**Contact the Orthopedic Clinic Nurse with your questions or concerns at 604-875-2609.**

**Family Resource Library** is located on the 2nd floor of the Ambulatory Care Building at BC Children's Hospital. The library can be reached by phone at 604-875-2345 Local 5102, or at 1-800 331-1533 (outside the Lower Mainland). You can access most resources online at: <http://bcchildrens.ca/fri>

*Developed by the health care professionals of the Orthopedics Department with assistance from the Department of Learning & Development*

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**BCCH1218**

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# The Pavlik Harness

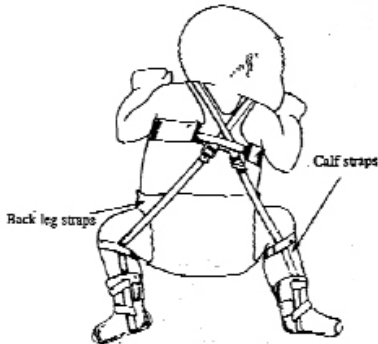
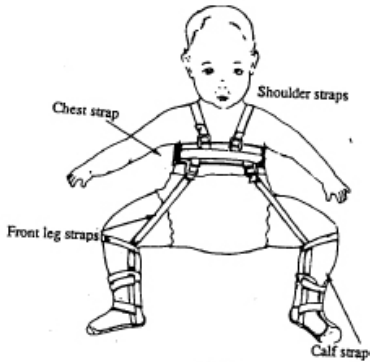


**4480 Oak Street, Vancouver BC, V6H 3V4**  
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**1-888-300-3088**  
**www.bcchildrens.ca**

## Why is it used?

The Pavlik Harness is a way to treat Developmental Dysplasia of the Hip (DDH). (This condition is described in another pamphlet with that name). For more information on DDH, please contact the Family Resource Library at BC Children's Hospital. The contact information is on the back of this pamphlet).

This treatment is only useful for babies up to 8 months. The harness holds the head of the femur (top of the thighbone) in the hip socket. It keeps the baby's legs out to the sides (abduction), with the knees bent (flexed) at 90-100 degrees. This position allows the hips to develop properly.



## How does the Harness Work?

The pictures show how the straps go on the baby. There is a:

- **Chest strap:** Position this level with the child's nipples - snug but not tight.
  - **Shoulder straps:** Connect these to the chest strap with hooks.
  - **Calf straps:** Fasten these just below the knee.
  - **Front leg straps:** These keep the knee bent (flexed). Do not adjust the straps.
  - **Back leg straps:** These keep the leg and hip in the correct position. The back leg straps are tight enough to keep the legs apart and prevent the knees from touching. But, the leg straps are not so tight that the knees are pulled too far back.
- ▶ Leave the straps as the doctor adjusts them. When your doctor feels your baby's hips are stabilized, you will be shown how to readjust it, take the harness off and put it back on your baby.
- ▶ The harness usually stays on between 23 – 24 hours a day. Your doctor will discuss this with you.
- ▶ At each diaper change and feeding, check that the harness is not blocking the circulation to your baby's feet. Your baby's feet should feel warm and look pink. Your baby should be able to kick his/her feet and wiggle his/her toes. Please ensure that your baby is attempting to **straighten** their legs at the **knee and hips** with equal movement. If you have any concerns about this, call the Clinic Nurse (number on the back of the pamphlet).

If it is after hours, the harness can be removed. Make an appointment for your baby at the Orthopedic Clinic as soon as possible in this situation.

## How Do I Wash and Care for My Baby's Skin?

- ▶ Wash your baby's exposed skin with a cloth while s/he is in the harness. Try to keep the harness dry as you wipe baby clean.
- ▶ At each diaper change, carefully check your baby's skin for signs of rash or skin breakdown. The areas to check carefully are:
  - The feet
  - Behind the knees
  - Underarms
  - The sides of your baby's neck
  - Under the straps at the back

If you see signs of redness or irritation, tuck small pieces of soft fabric (cosmetic pads or flannel) under the harness in these areas. Once your baby is allowed out of the harness for baths, undershirts and high cotton socks worn under the harness help to protect your baby's skin. Once-piece undershirts with snap crotches work well.

- ▶ Powders and oils do not help protect the skin under the straps. They may even irritate the skin. You can use a little baby lotion but rub it well into the skin.

## How Do I Change My Baby's Diaper?

- ▶ You can change the diaper without taking off the harness. Lift baby's bum with your hand rather than pulling on the feet.