

Pavlik Harness

Patient and Family Education

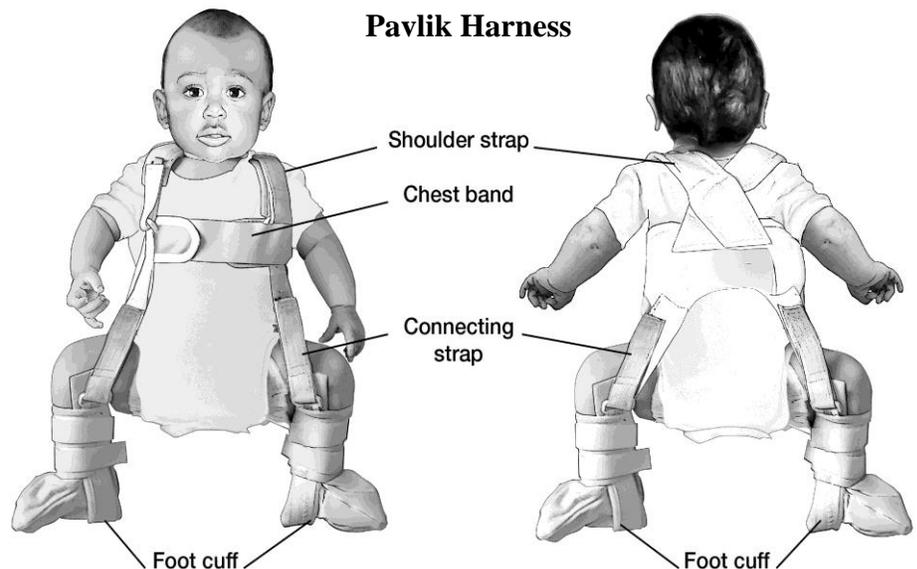
This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

What is a Pavlik Harness?

A Pavlik Harness is a soft, fabric brace. It has four main parts:

- Shoulder straps
- A band that wraps around your baby's chest
- Foot cuffs or boots
- Connecting straps that keep the legs and hips in the proper position

Both legs must be in the harness, even if there is a problem with just one side. It is very important to use the brace as your baby's doctor instructs.



How is it used?

A Pavlik Harness may be used when babies younger than 6 months of age have an injury to their femur (thigh bone) or a disorder of the hip. The harness will:

- Keep your baby's legs and hips in place while allowing some movement.
- Keep your baby's legs flexed up with his knees pointing out.
- Keep a broken femur (thigh bone) in position while it heals.

Who will treat my baby?

Your baby's doctor will manage his care. Doctors, physician assistants, orthotists and cast technicians are trained to fit the harness.

How long will my baby wear the harness?

Some guidelines include:

- Your baby will wear the Pavlik Harness for 24 hours a day.
- For hip dysplasia, it is worn for six to 12 weeks.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

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- For femur fractures, it is worn for 3 to 4 weeks.
- Never remove the Pavlik Harness unless advised by your baby’s doctor.
- Your baby will need to see the doctor every 1 to 2 weeks once you leave the hospital.

How should I dress my baby?

- Dress your baby in loose clothing that can be changed without removing the harness. You may also leave the harness on over bare skin.
- If your baby wears a soft T-shirt or other clothing under the harness, only remove one strap at a time when changing. This will help keep your baby’s legs in their proper position.
- Make sure your baby’s diapers are fastened **underneath** the harness.

How should I bathe my baby?

- Do not remove the harness for bathing.
- Give your baby sponge baths instead of regular baths. This will help keep the harness dry.
- Clean in all of your baby’s skin folds and creases to make sure there is no chafing or rubbing on the legs.
- Dry your baby’s skin very well.
- Check your baby’s skin every day for redness, chafing or rashes. Make sure to check the skin folds behind his knees and in the diaper area for irritation.
- Keep the harness as dry as possible. Towel dry the harness if it gets wet.
- If the harness gets dirty:
 - Do not remove it.
 - Gently spot clean the harness with mild soap and water.
 - Dry it with a towel.

What else do I need to know?

While your baby wears the harness, DO:	While your baby wears the harness, DO NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure he sleeps on his back and is able to turn his head to each side. • Make sure he has regular playtime. • Use a car seat, but try to limit the amount of time he is in it. • Place your baby with his tummy on your tummy and his legs out to either side of your chest when you breastfeed. • Always try to keep the knees outward. When you are holding the baby or he is lying down, avoid any contact to the outer legs that may push the knees inward. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place him on his side. • Hold him in a “standing position”. • Adjust the harness yourself. Only your doctor should adjust the harness during regular appointments. • Swaddle him. It could press his legs together when they need to remain apart. • Let your baby have Tummy Time unless a pillow is put under his tummy and chest.

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Also, avoid:

- Lifting him by his legs or feet.
- Using bumpers or rollers around the legs. This may limit the outward movement of the hips, which is needed for proper growth.
- Using a baby sling or carriers that limit the outward movement of the hips.
- Carrying your baby with his knees pressed together. Instead, hold him so his legs are able to move outward.
- Putting him in walkers or bouncers for six months after treatment, unless advised by your doctor.

When should I call the doctor?

Call the doctor **right away** if your baby:

- Is so fussy or irritable that you cannot comfort him.
- Stops kicking or moving one leg.
- Has areas of skin that become very red.
- Has a rash.
- Has more swelling around his toes.
- Has a fever over 101.5°F.

Also, call the doctor if you have any questions or concerns about how your baby looks or feels, or if you have any concerns about how the brace fits.

What follow-up care will my baby need?

Follow-up with your child's doctor as directed.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.