

# Limping Child with No History of Trauma or Injury

An information guide



# **Limping Child with No History of Trauma or Injury**

## **Introduction**

After assessment of your child, we feel that it is safe for you to go home. This leaflet will give you general information about the management of children who are limping and the signs to look out for that mean they require further medical advice.

## **Why is my child limping?**

We see many children brought to the Emergency Department because they have developed a limp. Most of these children will have an "irritable hip" (also known as transient synovitis), which will get better on its own without hospital treatment.

There are some other more serious causes, such as joint or bone infection, which the doctor will have ruled out by taking a history and examining your child. Occasionally, we may have performed blood tests and/or x-rays to help rule out a more serious cause.

## **Will my child be seen again?**

We would like to see your child again in 2 to 3 days to make sure that they are improving.

The doctor will assess your child and may also involve some of the other specialist teams in the hospital. They may need further investigations with blood tests and/or x-rays.

## **What is an Irritable Hip?**

Irritable hip is the most common cause of limp in children, usually only affecting one side. It is due to inflammation, not infection, of the hip joint and often happens after a viral illness.

Your child may complain of pain in the hip, groin, thigh or knee, resulting in a limp or difficulty crawling.

Irritable hip should improve on its own after one to two weeks, with children gradually getting back to their usual activities.

### **How can I help my child at home?**

- Your child should be encouraged to rest the affected leg as much as possible over the next few days, which may require them not to attend school or nursery for 2 to 3 days.
- Your child should avoid sport and strenuous activity for 2 weeks.
- Give regular pain relief medications, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen. You can reduce the amount of pain relief medicine you are giving your child as they improve.
- If your child is not completely better after 2 weeks, you should take them to see your GP.

### **What should I look out for?**

The following symptoms may indicate a more serious problem. You need to bring your child back to the Emergency Department immediately if they:

- Become unwell.
- Develop a high temperature.
- Are unable to put any weight at all on the affected leg.
- Have increasing or worsening pain.
- Have redness or swelling to any joint on the affected leg.
- Develop a rash.

**If your child's limp has improved and you no longer require your follow-up appointment, please call us and let us know on 0161 627 8933**

Further information and advice can be found at:

NHS Patient Choices: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Making Lives Better Patient Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

**If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service**

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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For advice on stopping smoking contact the Specialist Stop Smoking Service on 01706 517 522

**For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897**

**For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service**

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The NCA brings together Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust and the hospitals and community services of The Royal Oldham Hospital, Fairfield General Hospital in Bury, and Rochdale Infirmary (currently part of The Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust).

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