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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Irritable Hip Advice

Your child has been assessed and diagnosed with an Irritable hip. This is a common childhood condition that causes symptoms such as hip pain and limping. Doctors sometimes refer to irritable hip as Transient Synovitis.

What causes Irritable Hip?

The condition develops when the lining that covers the hip joint (the synovial membrane) becomes irritated and inflamed, although the cause of inflammation is unclear.

In some cases, irritable hip can occur following a viral infection such as a cold, a sore throat, or diarrhoea and vomiting.

Many experts think the synovial membrane in the hip becomes inflamed as a complication of the infection. However, there is no hard evidence to support this theory.

Who is affected?

Irritable hip can affect boys and girls of any age but is most common between the age of four and 9 years old. The condition affects twice as many boys than girls.

What symptoms can they have and is it serious?

Child may have a limp or difficulty crawling or standing and may complain of pain in the hip, groin, thigh or knee. Usually only one side is affected. In younger children who are unable to speak, the only noticeable symptom may be crying at night.

As a parent, it can be very worrying if your child is diagnosed with irritable hip and is struggling to walk. However, the condition is usually short-lived and most cases do not require any specific treatment.

How do we treat an Irritable Hip

Irritable hip normally gets better on its own in 1 or 2 weeks and doesn't cause lasting problems. You can usually look after your child at home.

Hip pain isn't usually severe, but your child may be reluctant to place weight on the affected leg. Bed rest is recommended until the symptoms of pain resolve. Your child will naturally adopt the most comfortable position for themselves.

A small number of children with irritable hip go on to have further episodes. However, these episodes usually become less frequent and eventually stop when the child is older.

While looking after your child at home here are some things you should and shouldn't do

Things you should do:	Things you shouldn't do:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they rest their leg until they're feeling better – keep them off nursery or school until they're recovered • Take Ibuprofen/Paracetamol, they can be bought over the counter from a local pharmacy or local shops, to relieve pain. • Ibuprofen will reduce the inflammation • Attend any follow-up appointments recommended by your doctor or nurse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let them do any activities that could put a lot of strain on their hip for at least 2 weeks – they can gradually return to their normal activities once they're feeling better Swimming is a good way to strengthen the joint and get it moving again <p>Avoid giving your child</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirin • Ibuprofen if they have Asthma.

Please contact the Emergency Department (not Minor injury unit) at the Grange University hospital for further advice, If your child:

- Does not start improving in 2 or 3 days or recover fully in one week
- Becomes more unwell in themselves (example - not wanting to eat or sleepier)
- Develops a temperature of 38⁰C or more or becomes hot and shivery
- If your child's pain becomes significantly worse
- Starts developing redness, warmth or swelling over the hip or the leg
- Becomes irritable
- Their pain went away but has come back
- You have any other concerns

If you are concerned about your child's progress, or if they have not improved within 2- 3 days, we advise you to contact your GP or attend the Emergency Department at the Grange University Hospital (not a Minor injury unit).

References:

Hip pain in children (irritable hip) - NHS

Scenario: Management of acute childhood limp | Management | Acute childhood limp | CKS | NICE

**This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**

