A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

Why we use lying supports

What are lying supports?

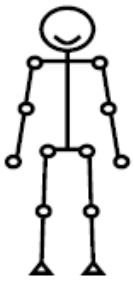
Lying supports help to keep your child or young person in a safe and supportive position during the day or night. We spend at least 2,920 hours in bed over the year which is a third of every day and often more.

What is a safe and supportive position?

This is a position which protects our joints and muscles from the effects of altered muscle tone, gravity, and not being able to move well. Ideally, it would be beneficial to work towards having a range of supportive positions throughout a 24-hour period (e.g. sitting, standing, lying). Good positioning is important as it can help with daily activities such as changing, dressing, feeding and play etc.

We use the term **symmetry** to describe good body positions and **asymmetry** to describe uneven positions.

Symmetrical position:
This is a good alignment of the whole body as pictured below.



Asymmetrical position:
If a child or young person cannot adjust their own posture, there is a risk that they will lie in a poor position for a prolonged period of time. This may result in their muscles becoming tight and their joints getting stiff and painful. This could lead to permanent changes in their posture which may impact on their daily activities.



How can a safe, supportive position be achieved in lying?

If there is a need identified for a lying support, your therapist will arrange an assessment. This may involve working with representatives from different equipment companies. There are a number of different options available, and your therapist will work with you to determine which option will be most appropriate for your child or young person. Lying supports can include a variety of different cushions, sheets, and positioning aids.

Will it be comfortable for sleep and how much will my child or young person be able to move?

Different levels of support can be provided that allow different amounts of movement. The aim is not to stop movement but to prevent your child getting stuck in potentially harmful positions that are difficult to move out of which could cause pain and discomfort.

Will their sleep be disturbed?

In many cases, children or young people's sleep improves with the use of lying supports. As with any change, some children and young people can take time to adapt to new equipment. Use of lying supports during the day can help to improve tolerance at night.

Can my child or young person's position be changed when using a lying support?

Some supports are easier to adjust for position changes than others. Your therapist will consider this and advise as necessary during the assessment.

Who will help to set this up and teach me to use it?

Once an assessment has been completed, your physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist will set the lying support up on your child or young person's bed. They will work with you to make sure you know how to adjust and use the lying support. Written instructions and/or photos may be provided if needed.

Are there any risks?

Your therapist will talk to you about your child or young person's particular needs and identify any possible risks. detailed risk assessment will be completed to ensure risks are considered and minimised where possible. This will involve consulting with your child or young person's consultant or GP (General Practice) and any other relevant professionals with your consent.

How long will the lying supports be needed?

Usually, the need for lying support is long term but every child and young person is different. Some need more support than others and their needs change over time, especially as they grow and change shape. Your therapists will make sure you know how to monitor the equipment and recognise when a review might be needed.

Can it be transported to another location (e.g. respite, hospital, holiday)?

Some lying supports are more portable than others. Your therapist will advise you.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of lying supports, please discuss these with your physiotherapist and/or occupational therapist.

Contact numbers

Caerphilly Children's Centre: 02920 867447
Nevill Hall Children's Centre: 01873 732712
Serennu Children's Centre: 01633 748000
Adult Learning Disability Team: 01633 656300

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