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## **What is a children's physiotherapist?**

Paediatric physiotherapists treat babies, children and young people from birth to 19 years of age. They have experience in child development and work with children with disabilities.

We understand that it is important to work with the child, their family and carers to help keep the hospital stay as short as possible.

## **Why might my child need orthopaedic physiotherapy while in hospital?**

If your child has:

- A broken bone (e.g. leg, arm, spine)
- An acute injury (e.g. sports injury)
- Decreased mobility due to an operation/pain/any other reason

## **Will my child be seen without me present?**

Physiotherapists will always try to gain consent from you prior to assessment or treatment of your child. If you are not present then the physiotherapist will try to contact you via telephone but sometimes it is not always possible to speak to you. In these cases, if your child needs to be seen at short notice, the physiotherapist will gain consent from your child (if appropriate due to their age and level of understanding i.e. understands enough to be made fully aware of what will happen to them and what will be asked of them).

The physiotherapist will also make sure that the doctor and/or nurse looking after your child is aware of the physiotherapy involvement at that time.

### **What an assessment involves:**

- The physiotherapist will ask questions about your child's mobility, general health and home/ school circumstances.
- They will assess your child's symptoms, body movements and walking pattern.
- They will assess your child's ability to safely manage the stairs if appropriate.
- From the assessment, the physiotherapist will decide on an individual treatment plan and decide how often your child needs physiotherapy input.

### **What treatment might my child receive?**

- Be given a walking aid (e.g. zimmer frame or crutches) and taught how to walk safely. Sometimes the doctors ask for children to be non-weight bearing on their affected leg (to help the leg heal), so they will need to learn how to hop with a walking aid for support.
- Be assessed on the stairs to make sure your child can safely manage at home.
- Be given exercises (e.g. to improve joint range of movement and muscle strength).
- Be advised about daily activities and when your child can return to school/ sports.

## **What happens when my child goes home?**

If your child needs further physiotherapy, the physiotherapist will refer them to your local outpatient physiotherapy department (if your child is aged 11 or older) or Children's Centre (if your child is under the age of 11).

If your child is in a plaster cast, a referral to outpatient physiotherapy may be made by the consultant when the plaster is removed. This may be to progress exercises, improve your child's walking and help them to return to normal activities. Sometimes further physiotherapy input is not required.

## **References**

APCP Physiotherapy for Children: "Fit for Play! Fit for Life!"

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