

Patient information

Perthes (Legg-Calve-Perthes)

Information for Parents

Your child has been diagnosed with a condition of the hip joint called 'Perthes' (named after one of the surgeons who first described it).

The head of the thigh bone (femur) that fits into the socket of the hip joint becomes soft and flatter in shape. It then gradually reforms over a period of several years.

This softening of the femoral head is due to an abnormality with the blood circulation through the bone. Why exactly this happens is being researched.

Treatment depends on the symptoms your child is getting. Any pain can be treated with pain relieving medicine, such as Calpol, together with a period of rest.

To protect the hip joint it is advisable to restrict activities to those that put less strain through the joint, for example swimming and cycling rather than skipping, or jumping or contact sports like football.

For a few children with more persistent pain, a period of bed rest may be required. Very occasionally traction is applied to the leg to counteract any painful muscle spasm.

Surgery is seldom needed – only in those rare cases where the femoral head is not being contained within the hip socket as it reforms.

Please note that this condition is self-limiting. The blood supply to the bone will return to normal and the bone will reform.

For the majority of children the treatment is pain relief and rest as necessary, with restrictions of some activities.

Traction, splintage and surgery are carried out only for a very small minority of cases.

The progress of your child's hip will be carefully monitored by the Orthopaedic Specialists and x-rays will be taken from time to time.

For more Information

Contact:

West Suffolk Hospital

Paediatric Orthopaedic Service

Contact Telephone: 01284 713294

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<http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main>

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