Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Advanced Nurse Practitioners on
023 8079 4991 or
Switchboard 02380 777222,
ask for bleep 2641
or
Ward G3 on 023 8079 6486
or your GP

Irritable Hip
Family
Information
Leaflet
Southampton
Children’s Hospital
www.suht.nhs.uk/sch

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What is Irritable hip?
This is inflammation (swelling) of the hip joint (properly known as acute transient synovitis). It is the most common cause of hip pain in young children.

What is the cause?
The exact cause is unknown. Although, the problem often follows either a viral infection or an episode of trauma.

What are the symptoms?
Your child will complain of pain in their hip or knee. They will find weight bearing and moving the hip uncomfortable. A fever is uncommon.

What investigations are needed?
It is important to find the reason for the hip pain and to exclude other possible causes that may require different treatment.

**X rays** these will show any bony abnormality

**Blood tests** taken to look for evidence of bone or joint infection

**Physical examination** this determines the seriousness of the condition by checking the range of movement in the hip.

**Bone scan** performed if your child’s condition does not improve. This procedure will be explained if it is needed.

What is the treatment?
Irritable hip is a short-lived condition that often gets better without any serious intervention. Sometimes a child may need a short stay in hospital to rest the hip joint. This could be by bed rest alone or simple skin traction. This means being on bed rest, sometimes for up 7-14 days. The traction is applied with bandages, and weights are attached to the end of the traction. The traction helps to reduce the pain by resting the hip joint.

Simple pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen (an anti-inflammatory medicine) helps recovery.

**When can my child be discharged from hospital?**
Your child can go home when:

1. They have a pain free range of hip movement
2. Their blood test results are within normal limits
3. The X ray is normal
4. They are able to walk without pain

**Care at home**
Your child will soon return to their normal selves. An occasional limp or complaint of pain is not uncommon in the first week at home. This should get better. Simple pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen (Junifen) may be given. Allow your child to gradually return to their usual activities. Swimming is an excellent way to reintroduce mobility in the hip joint.

An outpatient appointment is made to see your child in the nurse-led clinic at 6 weeks. This is to check their progress since going home from hospital. An X-ray may be needed at this appointment.

A small number of children have a further episode of hip pain. If this occurs your GP will need to see your child and may need