

If you have any questions or concerns, please Shipwreck Ward, A8 at Queen Alexandra Hospital. Tel: (023) 9228 3344 or your GP.

Consent- What does this mean?

Before any health professional examines or treats you they must have your consent or permission. Consent may be implied (e.g. offering a wrist for taking a pulse) or written (where you sign a form agreeing the treatment/operation). Young people are presumed to be able to give consent depending on their maturity and the nature of the decision.

Where a child is not competent to give consent, only a person (or body) with parental responsibility may consent on the child's behalf. More detailed information is available www.dh.gov.uk

Information we hold about you and your rights under the Data Protection Act

Please refer to the booklet 'Your Healthcare Information – Your Rights! Our Responsibilities!' for further guidance.

How to comment on your treatment

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer your questions. However, if you have any concerns you can also contact the Patient Experience Service on 0800 917 6039 or E-mail portsmouthhospitals.patientexperience@porthosp.nhs.uk

Other sources of information:

NHS Direct online:
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
Helpline: 0845 4647

Perthes' disease

Information for parents



Shipwreck Ward
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham
Tel: (023) 9228 6391

Specialist Support

If you require this leaflet in another language, large print or another format, please contact the Health Information Centre Tel: (023) 9228 6757, who will advise you.



This leaflet has been provided to answer some of the questions you may have about **Perthes' disease**.

What is Perthes' Disease?

Perthes' disease occurs when there is a loss of blood supply to the head of the femur, (the ball on the top of the thigh bone) where it joins the socket of the hip joint. This bone dies and becomes soft. It is one of the most common hip disorders in childhood, but little is understood about why it happens.

Perthes' disease affects boys more than girls and occurs between ages 3 and 12 - majority of them being aged 5-7 years old.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms tend to develop gradually. Your child may have sudden pain and hip irritation or pain in the knee. The pain may have been present over a period of weeks. Your child may walk with a limp and have difficulty moving their legs fully outward or inward.

What tests will be needed?

X-rays will be taken to confirm the diagnosis and blood tests will be taken to check that there is no infection. Sometimes a bone scan may be necessary.

What is the treatment for Perthes' Disease?

Different stages of Perthes' disease require different treatments and these will be decided by the consultant.

The overall aim of treatment is to keep the head of the femur well positioned in the hip socket. This encourages the blood supply to return and encourages bone growth at the hip joint. The different treatments are as follows:-

Treatment A

If the hip is in a good position and there is no spasm, then your child will be seen regularly in the outpatient clinic. X-rays will be taken at each visit - usually every six months.

If the head of the femur is healing, then your child will continue to be checked until it is completely better.

Treatment B will be started if your child has pain in their hip.

Treatment B

If the hip is in a good position and your child has pain or spasm, they will be admitted to hospital for simple traction. This means being on bed rest, usually for 7-14 days. The traction is applied using bandages and weights are attached to the end of the traction.

The traction helps reduce the pain by resting the hip joint and reducing the spasm.

Regular pain relief will be given.

Your child may have hydrotherapy (physiotherapy in a swimming pool) to encourage easy movement of the hip joint.

When the pain and spasm has settled, your child will be discharged from hospital and will be seen regularly in clinic (as per treatment A).

Treatment C

Occasionally night splints are necessary for a while to keep the legs widely apart while in bed.

Treatment D

About 50% of children with Perthes' disease develop more severe changes and surgery to reshape the upper end of the thigh bone may be necessary. This is more likely to happen in children who develop the disease after the age of 6.

The operation is followed by 7-10 days in hospital and then 6 weeks on crutches. Your child will then be checked every 6 months in the outpatient clinic, for as long as is necessary.

What are the benefits of treatment?

Generally, the head of the femur regrows back to normal and the movement of the hip returns to normal. This can take up to 2 years.

Are there any problems I should know about?

The main concern is that the head of the thigh bone may not reform properly. The more severe the condition the greater the risk that the problem will persist. This may lead to deformity, stiffness and early onset of arthritis in the joint.