

Safe wrapping for hip dysplasia

ORTHOPAEDIC FACT SHEET

Developmental dysplasia of the hip

The hip is a ball-and-socket joint that is held together by ligaments (Figure 1).

In the womb, babies generally lie with their hips in an outward position. This helps the hip joint to develop normally.

In some babies the ligaments around the hip joint are loose, which in most circumstances, corrects during the first few months of life.

If this looseness persists, the hip joint may not form properly, leading to the condition known as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH). In some severe cases, the hip may come out of the socket. This is known as dislocation of the hip (Figure 2).

Wrapping and DDH

Wrapping or swaddling newborn babies can help them feel more secure and comfortable. This may assist babies to settle and establish regular sleep patterns.

Research has shown that tight wrapping with the legs held straight can lead to hip dysplasia and dislocation. When this practice is stopped the frequency of dislocation is significantly reduced.

Safe wrapping

There are a number of ways to wrap babies. Whatever method you choose, always remember to leave enough room in the wrap for the legs to move freely. The legs should be able to bend at the hips with the knees apart to help the hips develop normally (Figure 3).

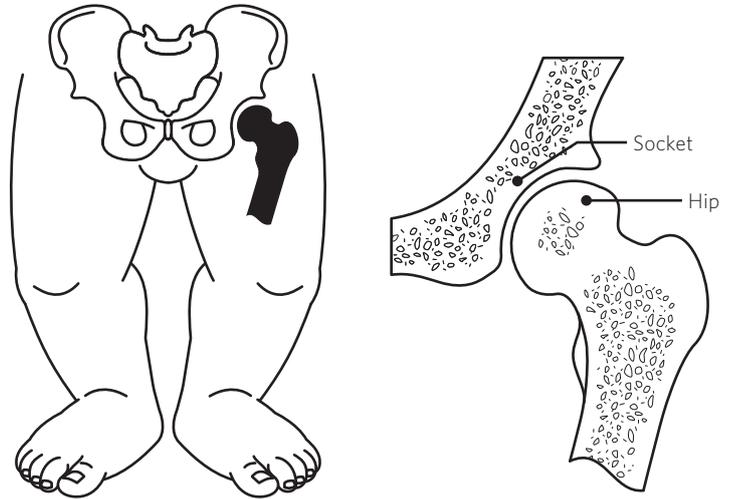


Figure 1. The normal infant hip

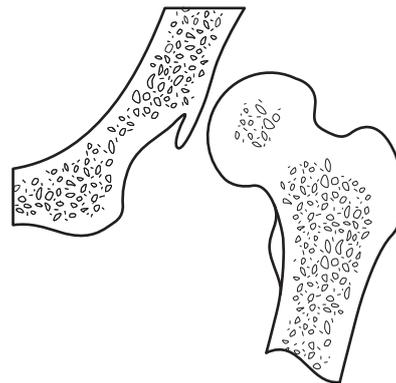


Figure 2. Dislocation of the hip

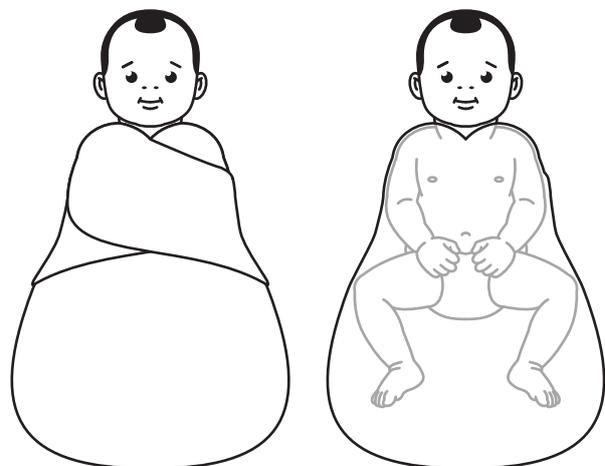


Figure 3. Safe wrapping with the hips bent and knees apart