



**HUTT maternity**

Hutt Valley Maternity Care

# **Examination of Newborn Baby's Hips**

Information for women and  
families





## **What:**

Developmental Dysplasia of the hip (DDH) happens in one of every thousand births (1:1000). Some babies such as those who have been breech (bottom coming first) or where there is a family history of this condition, are more at risk. An examination checks the hip joints to detect at a very early stage whether your baby requires treatment for a range of conditions in which the head (ball) of the hip bone does not fit appropriately into the hip socket at birth. Research and experience has shown that if DDH is present, then early diagnosis and treatment ensures an excellent long term result with normal hip function. Results following late diagnosis and treatment are less satisfactory.

## **Who:**

Your baby will be checked from top to toe by your Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) at birth and part of this may be a hip check.

For the past 30 years at Hutt Hospital, specialists Orthopaedic Surgeons have also offered an examination of the hips and feet for all newborn babies. You will be offered this check. Please note that as Hutt Hospital

is a teaching hospital, the Orthopaedic Surgeon may be accompanied by a doctor in training and you may be asked if she/he may also examine the baby under supervision.

### **When:**

The initial hip check may be done with the first examination by your LMC.

The hip check by a specialist is offered in the maternity unit, Special Care Baby Unit, or if you are outside these times, as an outpatient.

Outpatients will be given an appointment time to attend Fracture Clinic on the ground floor of the Heretaunga (main) block.

### **Follow up:**

Your baby should be able to bend their legs (flex) so avoid tight swaddling that restricts this.

Very occasionally a baby with apparently normal hips at birth will be found later to have hips that dislocate. For this reason you

are wise to ask your Lead Maternity Carer or General Practitioner to recheck your baby's hips at your postnatal visits especially when your baby is six weeks old.

If your midwife, doctor or Plunket nurse detects an abnormality, it is recommended that your baby should be referred to an Orthopaedic Specialist to be re-examined.

## Resources

<http://well-child.book.health.govt.nz/Section+4+WCTO+Schedule+components/Health+and+development+assessments#Hip+screening>

<http://www.healthpoint.co.nz/public/paediatrics/starship-paediatric-orthopaedics/developmental-dislocation-of-the-hip-congenital/>

[http://www.changeforourchildren.co.nz/files/docs/swaddling\\_nzcom\\_24082012.pdf](http://www.changeforourchildren.co.nz/files/docs/swaddling_nzcom_24082012.pdf)

