

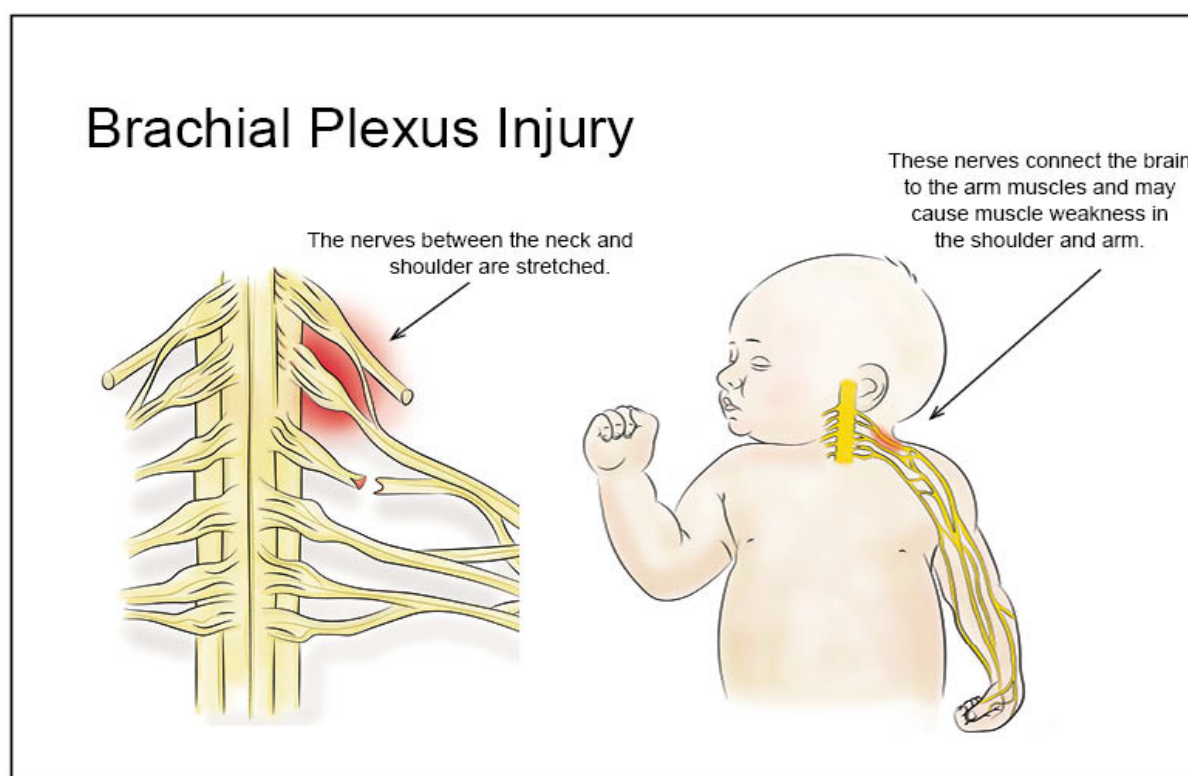
# Erb's Palsy

## Information for parents with a newborn

### What is Erb's Palsy?

This is also known as brachial plexus injury and is a condition which results in a weakness of the baby's arm due to injury to one or all of 5 primary nerves that supply the movement and feeling to the arm.

Many babies recover completely, but occasionally there is some persistent nerve damage.



It is important that some advice is followed after babies are born, which aim to prevent the arm becoming fixed in an abnormal position and improve the chances of a full recovery.

### Caring for your baby- what can you do to help?

In the first 5 days following birth or until review by a physiotherapist, try to follow this advice:

**Provide adequate support to the affected arm at all times to prevent stretching, pulling and pressure on the affected shoulder.**

**Sleeping:** Baby should be on their back to sleep with feet at the bottom of the cot. This should provide adequate support for the arm. Do not lie your baby on their affected arm.

**Bathing/skincare:** When bathing, keep the affected arm still and supported over baby's chest/tummy. Carefully wipe and clean under the arm without lifting the arm up too far and carefully dry under the arm to prevent any sore skin.

**Dressing:** During dressing, put the **affected arm into the garment first** and when taking clothes off, **leave it until last** to avoid any pushing twisting and turning of the shoulder.

**Feeding:** Find the positions that work best for you and your baby but keep baby's affected arm down by their side with the forearm over chest/ tummy. Do not let the arm drop and hang without support. Some parents have found wrapping the arm in a thin muslin cloth during feeding helps to ensure the arm is supported. You can stroke baby's arm during feeds.

**Carrying/ handling:** Support the affected arm by holding your baby's arm close to their body when picking up and carrying your baby to avoid the arm hanging down. Do not pull on your baby's arm or lift them under the armpits.



**Encourage sensory awareness and gentle guided movement of affected arm.**

Let your baby's hand grasp your finger and gently guide their hand to their mouth and let them suck on their hand, avoiding too much shoulder movement.

Touch, stroke, massage and kiss your baby's arm and hand. Giving these sensations remind the brain their arm is there.

**This advice applies for the first 5 days or until your first follow up appointment with the physiotherapist at outpatient clinic.**

If you have any concerns, contact:

Paediatric Physiotherapy Department  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Royal Hospital for Children and Young People  
Edinburgh

Tel: 0131 312 1079

For further information regarding the condition we recommend: [www.erbspalsygroup.co.uk](http://www.erbspalsygroup.co.uk) who can supply you with a baby advice leaflet and have lots of online information.

