

## **Ponseti Programme**

Information for Parents and Carers

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Your baby has been diagnosed as having Congenital Talipes Equinovarus (CTEV) or Clubfoot. The treatment your child is going to have is called the Ponseti Technique.

### **What is the Ponseti technique?**

It is a technique to straighten the feet using a series of plaster casts. The treatment manipulates the joints and stretches the tight tissues of the foot. The foot is held in place with a plaster cast for 7 days. This allows enough time for the muscles and ligaments to relax and for the joints to move into the correct position.

### **What will happen at the appointment?**

Each week when you attend the clinic your baby will have the plaster cast removed. Your baby will have their foot / feet washed and can be weighed if you wish. Your baby will then have the foot positioned again and a new plaster applied to hold this next position. They will usually require between 4 and 8 plaster casts.

### **What can I do to help?**

Your baby is not in any pain with the casting but they can be unsettled by lying on the bed and having their leg held. You can help your baby to relax during the procedure by giving them a bottle feed. If you are breast feeding giving them a feed just before the appointment can help too.

### **What happens next?**

Many babies with clubfoot have a short tight heel cord and this is difficult to correct with the casting. Most babies therefore need a procedure called an Achilles Tenotomy. This is a minor procedure that releases the heel cord. This is usually done under a general anaesthetic but usually you will be able to take your baby home on the same day. After this is done your baby's foot will then be put into the final position and another plaster cast applied. This plaster cast will be on for 3 weeks.

## What happens after plaster casting?

Your baby will be fitted with some specially made boots that are joined together by a bar. The bar holds the feet in their correct position. The boots and bar must be worn **ALL THE TIME for 3 months** only being removed for bathing. After 3 months your child will only wear the boots and bar whilst asleep but this will continue until they are 5 years old.

## Looking after your baby's plaster casts

The plaster is set before you leave the clinic room however can take several hours to dry out fully. Please be extra careful with the plaster until it is dry. You must:

- Check your baby's toes are normal skin colour and warm at every nappy change.
- You can put socks over the casts to keep the toes warm but not in the first few hours after the cast has been applied.
- Check your baby's skin around the edges of the plaster for any signs of rubbing or cracking of the plaster.
- Keep the plaster clean and dry
- Not bath your baby but use a cloth to clean your baby without getting the cast wet.
- Change your baby's nappy frequently to avoid soiling of the plaster. Disposable nappies with elasticated legs work best. Try to fit the leg of the nappy above the top of the plaster to avoid urine leaking under the plaster.

## It is very important to contact the hospital if:

- You cannot see your baby's toes
- Your baby's toes are not normal skin colour and warm
- The plaster becomes loose, cracked or crumbles.
- The cast becomes soiled particularly inside the cast
- There is a bad smell coming from the cast
- Your baby is crying more than usual and appears to be in pain. It may be because the plaster is rubbing in an area that is not visible.
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**As your baby's caregiver, you play a very important role in the success of their treatment – if you have any questions or concerns please contact your physiotherapist.**

Please note, the staff specially trained in this technique are only available to change plasters during the normal working week however if you have a concern out of hours please contact A & E.

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50 Little France Crescent  
Edinburgh EH16 4TJ  
Tel.: 0131 536 1000  
Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm

(Out of hours contact A & E Department, RHCYP)  
Tel: **0131 312 0007**