

Talipes

Talipes is what was once called 'Club Foot'. Talipes is when one or both of the baby's feet are pointing down and inwards. If the foot, or feet are pointing up and outwards then this is called talipes calcaneovalgus. This is due to the tendons in the foot being weaker on one side than on the other, this causes either foot to be pulled either inwards or outwards depending on which side is weaker.

Talipes can be diagnosed in a number of ways, through an ultrasound scan before the baby is born or when the baby goes for their six week check. When a new mum has had a scan which shows the baby has Talipes, the new mum will attend clinic to discuss the treatment options for the baby. If diagnosis has occurred at the six week check then the affected foot and hip will be examined and scanned, giving a more thorough treatment plan.

When it has been confirmed in clinic that a baby has Talipes then they will have plaster casts on the affected foot/feet and the following steps will be followed;

- 1) They will be seen by the physiotherapist who will do small stretching exercises to see how flexible the baby's feet are.
- 2) The position of the feet is help in place while the plaster cast is put on. The foot is not brought round in one plaster, it is slowly brought round in six to eight weeks and each plaster cast moves the baby's foot gradually.
- 3) They will come back every week to have the plaster changed this will be done by soaking it off in the baby bath (babies are too small for the plaster saw as they will not understand the noise and the vibrations from it) as they will not be able to go in the bath at home once the plaster cast is on.
 - They will have one bath which soaks off the plaster (which may take up to half an hour depending on the thickness of the plaster).
 - They will then have the option to have a fresh bath where parents can bring in bubble bath, creams and lotions to put on while they are in/after their bath.
 - These appointments can sometimes take up to 1 hour depending on the clinic and how easy the plaster comes off and if the baby needs feeding during this time.
- 4) Before the last plaster is put on the baby's feet are measured. This is done for the sizing of boots and bars that the baby will have to wear throughout childhood to maintain a straight foot.
- 5) Boots and bars are worn 23 hours per day up to the child being able to walk, this is to give them time to have a bath, play and kick without the boots on.
- 6) When the child can walk they go on to wearing them at night only (this is because they are doing their own physio by walking around) this becomes difficult as sometimes the child learns how to take the boots off. These are then kept on (if

possible) up to the age of 5, sometimes they may be dropped off sooner depending on the consultant's opinion.



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