

Orthotics Department

Mitchell boots and bar system Information for parents and carers

Introduction

Your child has now successfully completed their Ponseti casting treatment and will progress to the next stage — wearing boots and bar.

Why does my baby need boots and bar?

The boots and bar keep the feet in the position needed to stop the muscles and ligaments becoming tight again and deformity recurring. This specialised footwear makes the most of the progress made by the plaster cast and is a very important stage of the treatment.

It is vital that you follow the wearing instructions for these boots and contact the hospital if there are any problems. Improper wear can result in relapse of the condition Congenital Talipes Equinovarus (CTEV) deformity and relapse can occur within 24 hours.

Image of Mitchell boots and bar system



How long will my child wear the boots and bar?

Your child's consultant will advise you on how long they will be needed. For the first three months the boots and bar are usually worn for 23 hours a day. After three months this time may be reduced to night times and naptimes only and will usually continue until your child is four years old.

Initial fitting instructions

At the first fitting appointment in the Orthotics Department, the Orthotist will fit your baby with appropriate-sized boots and bar. The Orthotist will advise you on how to fit the boots and bar when at home. Please ensure your child wears good, supportive footwear during the day.

What to do when at home

When the plaster cast is first removed, your baby's feet and legs may be tender and look quite red and sore but this will settle down within a day or two.

For approximately one hour a day pay attention to your baby's feet and legs by:

- Soaking their feet in a warm bath.
- Bending their knees up together.
- Massaging their feet.
- Playing with their feet and legs.

After this time put cotton socks with small or no seams on your baby's feet.

- Put the boots on your baby as you have been instructed in clinic,
- Ensure baby's heel is right back in the boot and in contact with the sole.
- Use the heel cutouts in the boot to monitor position of the foot.
- Bending the knee will ease putting on the boot.
- After baby has been wearing the boots for one hour fit the bar.
- The boots should be firm but not tight. The ankle strap should be secured first to ensure foot is in correct position.

Do not adjust equipment provided— in case of any fitting problems or growth, contact the Orthotics Department

At bedtime/nap time

If baby is distressed, it may be necessary to fit their boots and bar when they are asleep. If possible, try to avoid removing the brace because baby is unsettled. Be vigilant with the baby's blankets and bedclothes as they may become tangled with the boots and bar.

Your baby may be distressed initially, so you could experience a few disturbed nights.

Appointments

After the first fitting appointment there will be will a review appointment in two weeks' time. Bring all the equipment provided with you i.e. the boots and the bar.

It is extremely important that you attend all appointments you are given

What to do if the foot/feet become stiff

If the affected foot or feet become stiff and you are unable to fit the boots properly, it is likely that relapse has occurred.

You must contact Orthotic Department immediately or attend Accident & Emergency Department if outside of office hours.

In instances of CTEV relapse, the baby may have to undergo further Ponseti casting until the foot is corrected enough to progress to boots and bar once more.

Travelling

If you cannot properly fit baby in a car seat, the bar can be removed for duration of journey

Please remember

It is parents/carers responsibility to contact the Orthotics Department if:

- They have difficulty fitting the boots
- Their child's feet have become at all stiff
- They are concerned your child's skin looks sore
- The boots and/or bar look too small or are damaged

Contact Details

If you have any problems or questions please contact a member of the team who will be happy to discuss them with you.

Telephone: 0151 252 5318

Fax: 0151 252 5319

E mail: orthotics@alderhey.nhs.uk

This fact sheet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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