



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Pavlik Harness

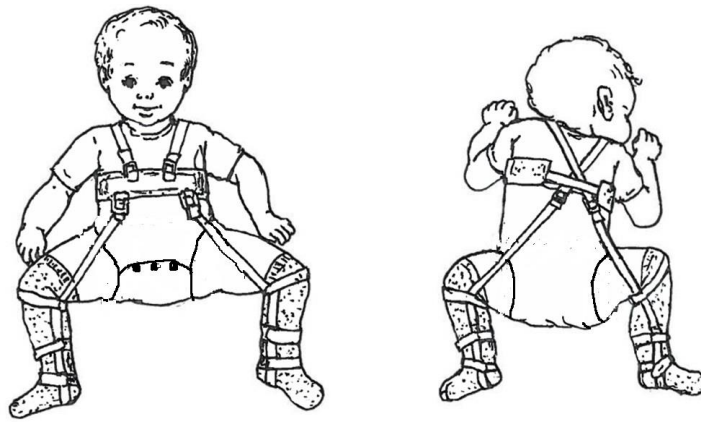
The Pavlik (PAV-lick) harness is a brace used for babies with a hip disorder or femur fracture. The harness has chest, shoulder, and leg straps to keep the legs bent and turned outward. This helps the bones or joints to heal and form normally. Your baby can still move while in the harness with the hips and legs in the correct positions.

Wearing the Pavlik harness

- A medical practitioner (physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant) will apply the harness the first time and teach you how to open and close the shoulder and chest straps. Clinic nurses in the orthopedic department may also apply the Pavlik harness and show you how it works. (Picture 1)
- The straps will be marked to help you keep them in the correct positions. Adjustments are made as needed at follow-up visits. **Do not adjust the straps without checking with your child's practitioner.**
- Your child's practitioner will tell you if you may remove the harness. **Do not take the harness off unless the practitioner says you may remove it.** Do not remove the harness for any longer than the exact length of time allowed by the practitioner.
- You may place a pillow or roll underneath your baby's legs for support and comfort.

Dressing your baby

- Dress your baby in loose clothing using stretchy materials and larger sizes. Do not use close-fitting clothing that brings your baby's knees together. Do not swaddle your child's legs.



Picture 1 Front and back views of baby with a Pavlik harness.

- A one-piece diaper shirt (onesie) that comes up from the back, goes between the legs, and fastens in front, works well to keep your baby's skin covered.
- To change a diaper, lift your baby from under the buttocks and slide the diaper under; do not pull the legs. Place your baby's diapers under the straps to keep the harness clean and to keep the hips and legs in the correct position.
- If the harness straps get dirty, use a gentle soap on a washcloth and rub the dirty spot. Then rinse the spot with a clean washcloth. Let the strap air-dry or use a blow dryer on the cool setting.
- After your baby eats, the strap across their tummy may look tight. If so, you may loosen the Velcro[®] chest band a little. Make it snug again when the chest band no longer looks tight.

Bathing your baby

- Give your baby a sponge bath with the harness in place. You may remove the harness during bath time only if directed by the baby's practitioner.
- Check all skin folds, especially behind the knees and in the diaper area. Keep these areas clean and dry. You may massage areas of irritation with a mild, soothing lotion.
- It is best **not** to use powders or creams under the harness.

Activity

- It is normal for your baby to seem more irritable for the first 2 to 3 days of wearing the harness.
- The Pavlik harness is a useful treatment until your baby is about 6 months old and wants to turn over or crawl. As long as your baby is in the harness correctly and the legs stay apart, your baby may be as active as they want.

- When you carry your baby, hold them so the legs remain apart.

Traveling

Your baby should be able to fit into a regular car seat for travel while the harness is in place.

When to call the medical practitioner

Please call your child's practitioner or the orthopedic clinic if:

- Your baby's feet are swollen or puffy, even after the Velcro® straps have been loosened.
- The harness seems too small.
- The harness does not keep the legs apart and the knees bent.
- Areas of the baby's skin are raw or a rash develops.
- Your baby has problems adjusting to the harness.

Follow-up

- Your baby will need imaging studies and strap adjustments during treatment. The baby may require several harness sizes with growth. This depends on the length of treatment.
- Be sure to follow all the instructions your child's medical practitioner gives you and keep all follow-up appointments.

If you have any questions, please ask your child's medical practitioner or nurse.