



## HIP SPICA CAST REMOVAL

Your child has been in a hip spica cast for the past 6-8 weeks and now that his/her femur fracture has sufficiently healed, the Orthotechnician and a Physical Therapist have removed the cast. This handout will prepare you for what to expect now that the cast has been removed. The following information is only a reference guide. Please direct all questions and concerns to the Physical Therapist, Orthotechnician, or Physician.

### **Skin Care**

The skin under the cast will appear white and flaky and may be very itchy. There may be wound sites present that will be evaluated. It is extremely important to follow these guidelines to regain normal skin integrity:

- Do NOT let your child scratch his/her skin at all. If your child complains of itchiness, rub a white, non-scented lotion into the skin.
- Bathe the skin with a mild soap on a regular basis. For most children, this means once a day.
- Do not scrub the skin with any brushes, loofah sponges, or rough towels. When bathing the child, rub the skin gently with a wet washcloth and mild soap.
- Treat any open wounds as instructed by the Physical Therapist.

### **Walking**

At this point there is adequate healing in your child's femur (thighbone) and he/she is able to support the weight of the body during walking and other upright activities. Your child is able to bear as much weight through the leg as he/she wants (weight bearing as tolerated). The Physical Therapist has evaluated your child and a walker or pair of crutches has been issued to help with the adjustment. Oftentimes the child is hesitant and fearful to begin walking. The best thing to do is to encourage your child to walk frequently using the walker/crutches. The Physical Therapist will show you how to help guard your child as he/she walks. The walker or pair of crutches will be used temporarily, usually for about two weeks depending on the child, until the adjustment to walking is made.

## Flexibility and Strength

When your child was in the hip spica cast, all of the muscles of the hip, knee, and trunk were immobilized. This has caused the muscles to lose strength and flexibility and will impact your child's ability to move as he/she did before the casting. The Physical Therapist will show you simple exercises for your child to perform to regain strength and flexibility. Promoting normal movement through play is a great way to strengthen and stretch the muscles of the trunk, hip, knee, and ankle.

## Activity Level and Balance

It is important that you promote age appropriate activities for your child. As your child becomes used to having his/her own two legs back underneath him/her, they will begin to explore new activities once again. All children are generally uncoordinated as they develop new skills, but it is critical to realize that coupled with your child's decrease in flexibility and strength, your child will appear very uncoordinated. Until your child is able to regain some strength and balance, do not promote activities in which there is a high risk of the child falling. For instance, when your child is coming down the stairs, someone should be in front of them at all times until your child has regained his/her previous level of coordination prior to this injury.