Irritable Hip in Children

Irritable hip is the most common cause of hip pain and/or limping in children. It is also known as transient synovitis. It usually gets better by itself within 1-2 weeks. It is most often seen in children aged 3-10 years. The pain and limp are due to inflammation of the lining of the joint and increased fluid inside the joint. This leaflet explains more about this condition.

What are the symptoms of irritable hip?
Irritable hip usually causes a limp. Moving and putting weight on the leg may be uncomfortable or painful.

Children may also have a mildly raised temperature and some children may have recently experienced a viral illness such as a cold, a sore throat or diarrhoea and vomiting.

Children with an irritable hip will get better between about 3 days to 2 weeks.

What causes irritable hip to happen?
The exact cause is unknown, but it often follows a viral infection or minor injury.

What is the treatment?
- Irritable hip is short lasting and usually gets better without any treatment within a week or two.
- Pain relief such as ibuprofen or paracetamol can help recovery.
- Your child should rest until the symptoms have resolved.
- If the symptoms last longer than 2 weeks then your child’s doctor may arrange further investigations.
- Your child will usually have a follow up appointment at the hospital or with your GP to check that their symptoms have resolved completely.
**What else could it be?**

You are being given this leaflet as we think your child has irritable hip. It is important to consider other causes of a painful joint such as infection of a bone or joint (septic arthritis or osteomyelitis). Sometimes it may be necessary to do blood tests and other investigations such as an x-ray or ultrasound to confirm the diagnosis.

**Once at home when should you seek further medical advice?**

- If your child develops a temperature of 38 degrees or more
- If you child’s pain becomes significantly worse
- If your child becomes more unwell in themselves (e.g. not wanting to eat, more sleepy)
- If your child develops any pain, swelling or redness is any other joints
- If your child still has pain and/or a limp after 2 weeks

**Children’s Ward telephone numbers: 01225 824421 or 824813 (24 hours a day)**

**Are there long term complications?**

Irritable hip will get better by itself and not cause any long term problems with the joint.

**Key points to remember**

- Irritable hip is the commonest cause of a limp in children.
- It is generally a mild condition that will get better on its own with rest within 2 weeks.
- Pain relief such as ibuprofen and paracetamol may help recovery.

**Further information**

Your GP, hospital doctor or health visitor will be happy to give further advice

NHS website: [http://www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

[http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/irritable-hip/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/irritable-hip/Pages/Introduction.aspx)