

Rhino brace

Developmental dysplasia of the hip

Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) is a condition where a baby's hip joint develops irregularly. In a child with DDH, the socket (acetabulum) is shallow, the ligaments around the hip joint are loose and the ball (femoral head) may become unstable. In some babies, these factors can result in partial dislocation (subluxation) or full dislocation of the hip.

What causes DDH is unknown, but it is more common in first-borns, girls, breech births, and those with a family history.



Treatment varies depending on the severity and may include a brace (also known as an orthosis), hip spica (plaster), or surgery – sometimes in combination.

This information focuses on treatment using a Rhino brace. You can discuss other treatment options with your orthopaedic doctor.

What is a Rhino brace?

A Rhino brace is an orthosis that your baby needs to wear to treat developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH).

How to fit your baby's Rhino brace

[Watch the video](#) for step-by-step instructions on how to fit the Rhino brace on your baby or scan the QR code.



Nappy changes

The Rhino brace needs to be removed for nappy changes.

Clothes

Clothes should be worn underneath the Rhino brace. It is preferable to wear leggings or long pants under the brace to prevent skin irritation or rubbing behind your baby's knees. If this occurs, please contact the Orthotics Department.

Sleeping

Sleep suits, sleeping bags or sleeping sacks may be worn with the brace, but you may need to use bigger sizes to avoid your baby's knees being pulled in towards each other.



Prams and car seats

If your baby has trouble fitting comfortably in a pram or car seat when wearing the brace, let your orthotist know. A consultation with an occupational therapist (OT) at Perth Children's Hospital can be arranged to help modify your current pram or car seat or find a more suitable option.

Bathing

You may remove the Rhino brace to bath your baby only if you have been instructed to do so.

Cleaning the brace

The brace may be cleaned with a baby wipe or a damp cloth and any soap you use on your baby's skin. Make sure the brace is completely dry afterwards to avoid skin irritation. Do not use a hairdryer to dry the brace as this can melt the foam.

What can my baby do in the brace?

You and your baby will be able to enjoy all the things you currently do while they are in their brace. Your baby will adjust to the feeling of the brace, and will learn to do the following:

- Tummy time – If your baby appears uncomfortable on the floor during tummy time, you can prop a thin pillow or rolled up towel underneath your baby's chest to help with positioning.
- Rolling and sitting
- Crawling and walking – Very occasionally the plastic between the legs can buckle due to extra pressure, meaning the hips are no longer at the correct angle. If you notice a fracture line or bend in the plastic between the legs, please contact the Orthotics Department.

Checking the size of your baby's brace

Please contact Orthotics if you feel your brace is too small. Signs include:

- Your baby is starting to fuss again when wearing the brace
- The back section of the brace is digging into your baby's back.

Getting used to the Rhino brace

It will take you and your baby a little while to adjust to the Rhino brace. It's important to note the brace is not causing your baby any pain, it's just frustrating as they can't kick their legs freely. It may be helpful to get into a routine of removing the brace at the same time each day to encourage your baby to adjust to it.



Follow up appointments

A doctor in the Orthopaedic Department will regularly review your child's hips throughout the length of treatment. The Rhino brace will be reviewed by an orthotist in the Orthotics Department.

Please make sure you bring your Rhino brace to your follow up appointment.

Top tips

- The Rhino brace is not causing your baby pain. They may be unsettled until they are used to wearing the brace; this is normal.
- Please persist with the Rhino brace treatment and contact the Orthotics Department if you are concerned.
- **Do not adjust the brace yourself.** Should you feel it requires an adjustment or review please contact the Orthotics Department

Your baby's wear time is _____

Learn more

For more information about DDH and Rhino braces visit the PCH website at:
pch.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Orthotics

Contacting the Orthotics Department

Phone: (08) 6456 0411

Email: PCHOutpatients.Orthotics@health.wa.gov.au

If you are emailing, please provide your child's full name, date of birth and attach photos to help explain your concern. An orthotist will get back to you within one business day.



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