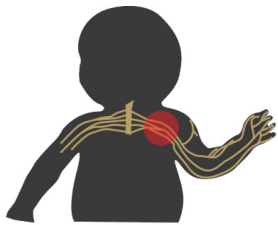




Neonatal brachial plexus injury



The brachial plexus is a group of nerves that come out of the spinal cord in the neck and give movement and feeling to the arm. It is through these nerves that the brain sends electrical signals to the muscles and skin. Each nerve supplies movement and feeling to specific areas in the arm and hand.

What is a brachial plexus injury?

One or more nerves may be injured from being stretched during birth. This can affect arm movement and feeling and cause weakness in the muscles in the arm.

Most nerves re-grow and return to normal muscle function during the first year, but some muscle weakness may remain.

Caring for your baby at home

- Make sure your baby's arm is protected and well supported. Try not to let your baby's arm hang unsupported.
- When picking your baby up make sure their arm is well supported.
- Avoid holding your baby under their armpits or pulling them by their arms.
- When dressing your baby, put the affected arm into their clothes first.
- When undressing your baby, take the affected arm out of their clothes last.

- When bathing your baby, support their arm, making sure you clean and dry their armpit well and between creases.
- When feeding and cuddling your baby, wrapping them will help support their arm.

Physiotherapy follow up

Your physiotherapist will arrange an appointment within a few weeks after your baby is discharged from the hospital. This will include reassessing your baby's arms as well as developing an active home exercise program. The need for specialist and or surgical referrals will also be monitored by your physiotherapist.

More information

- Understanding Brachial Plexus Palsy, a book for parents https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/plastic/BRACHIAL_PLEXUS_book.pdf
- Obstetric brachial plexus palsy Erbs palsy fact sheet https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Obstetric_brachial_plexus_palsy_Erbs_palsy

Paediatric Physiotherapy contact information

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