Home Care of the Child in Traction

The purpose of traction is different depending on your child's orthopaedic problem. It may be used to:

- Decrease muscle spasm.
- Stretch muscles.
- Relieve discomfort.
- Maintain alignment of bones.
- Ease movement of the femur bone into the hip socket.

Activity:

Here are some things that you should do for your child while he is in traction.

- Provide a variety of activities that he can do in bed such as coloring, reading, board games, puzzles, movie videos or video games.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids and eat fruits and vegetables. This will help with constipation that can occur due to his limited activity.
- You will need to arrange for your child's special transportation needs. We will give you a prescription for a handicapped parking sticker.
- Encourage your child to continue with school work (as appropriate for age). You may need to make arrangements with the school for a homebound teacher.

Circulation and Skin Care:

It is very important to care for your child's skin while he is in traction.

- Note the color, temperature, movement and presence of swelling of your child's feet before placing him in traction.
- Check the circulation by gently squeezing the large toe. Note the whitening and pinking up of the skin and nailbed as you release the pressure. The skin and nailbed should pink up immediately.
- Re-check your child's feet again five minutes after applying the traction. If there is any change, rewrap the ace bandage or reapply the traction boot.
- Make sure your child can move all his toes when his foot is touched or tickled.
- Loosen the boot or unwrap the ace bandage and check the condition of your child's skin every four hours. Call your doctor about any open sores, blisters or redness that do not go away within 20 minutes.
- Replace the boots anytime they are slipping. Check the toes for color and movement after you rewrap the ace bandage or reapply the traction boot.
• Do not use lotions or powders on your child’s legs or feet.

• Sponge bathe your child daily. Be sure to dry him thoroughly.

Call the Orthopaedic Clinic at (816) 234-3075, or the Children’s Mercy Hospital Information Line at (816) 234-3188, if:

• Your child develops any changes in his skin condition:
  • Open sores
  • Red areas that do not clear after 20 minutes
  • Large blisters

• Your child develops any changes in the circulation to his feet:
  • Swelling that does not go away
  • White or blue color to his feet that does not return to pink after adjusting the boot or ace bandage
  • Not being able to wiggle or move his toes
  • Not being able to feel touch in his feet or toes

• Your child has severe or constant pain to feet or legs.

• You have questions or concerns about your child’s traction.

During evening or weekend hours, call the hospital operator at (816) 234-3000 and ask for the Orthopaedic resident on call.

Follow-Up:

Be sure to keep all your child’s follow-up appointments.

Your child’s next appointment is scheduled for _____/_____/_____ at ______________.