

## Trauma and orthopaedics

# Ponseti technique: Further Instructions for boots and bar stage

Your child has now reached the final stage of treatment with the Ponseti method of treatment for clubfoot. This is the longest part of treatment and relies on your commitment and help in applying the boots and bar. As you and your child become settled in the routine of wearing the boots you will need to visit the hospital less often. It is very important to contact the hospital if you are not happy with applying the boots or if your child is not tolerating the boots. Contact details will have been given to you in clinic and are given at the end of this information leaflet.

## Why are the boots and bar important?

The boots and bar hold the feet in the correct position to stop the muscles and ligaments pulling back and the foot twisting in again. Once a child reaches the age of four and a half years, the bones in the foot will be less likely to deform even if the muscles pulling the foot inwards are still a little overactive. When the boots and bar are used, the risk of recurrence is very much lower than if the boots are not applied. It is important to make sure the boots and bar are worn and fitted correctly.

## Adjustment time

The clubfoot journey is different for each child, some adapt quickly, and some can take several days. Your baby might be unsettled at times, but they will get used to their new boots after a short period. **DO NOT** let your baby's fussiness tempt you to remove the boots for a prolonged amount of time. Removing the boots for long periods at the beginning is extremely unhelpful in getting your baby to accept their boots and bar as part of a new routine.



## Patient Information

Allow yourself and your baby at least a week to adjust to this new routine.

If boots and bar are not worn, then there is a possibility of relapse. The boots and bar maintain the foot correction, which was achieved during the casting stage of the Ponseti treatment. This stage can be seen as the most important part of the treatment.

### **Skin**

Your baby's skin may be sensitive after casting and their muscles are likely to be tender. A warm and calm environment to bathe them can be beneficial. Warm baths using sensitive and unscented baby soap is recommended. Regular touching of the feet and massage with a small amount of baby moisturiser, may help to reduce the sensitivity.

### **Moving around**

Now that your baby is wearing boots and a bar, they will need some help to learn how to move their legs together. To help your child learn how to kick and swing their legs at the same time you should:

- gently move the bar gently up and down
- gently push and pull the brace so that your baby learns how to bend their knees while wearing boots and bar

Babies and children, who wear boots and bar, learn to sit, crawl, and walk just the same as other children.

### **Developing a routine**

Babies get used to wearing their boots and bar very quickly. You can help them by keeping a cheerful attitude during times of application. Make sure you smile and sing with your baby while making it a regular part of their day. There are also books available that feature children wearing boots and bar; these are particularly useful explaining the importance of them to older siblings or family members.

Boots and bar will need to be worn for 23 hours a day for the first 3 months and then 16 hours a day after that.

### **Sticking with it**

The application of boots and bar, and the daily schedule of wear can be difficult. Your baby might cry at first when the shoes are applied, and the older child might complain about wearing the brace to bed.

It is natural for parents to consider skipping it sometimes, so that they do not have to battle or persuade their little one to comply. But even brief periods of non-compliance can cause problems and can make it harder for the child to accept it as part of everyday life. Missing days can allow the feet to move out of the corrected position very slightly. This can result in the boots not fitting properly, becoming uncomfortable and having the baby or/child refusing to wear them. This can result in the foot relapsing and additional corrective treatment.

### **Tips for applying the boots.**

- Apply dressings to the heel and top of the foot.
- Always use well-fitting cotton socks, ones with a grip on the bottom are ideal to stop the foot slipping. Make sure that the socks are smooth and there are no creases in them when applying the boots.
- Bend the knee and point the heel into the back of the boot.
- Hold the foot in the shoe and fasten the middle strap.
- Check the heel is down.
- Fasten the other buckles tightly.

If you notice any sore areas remove the shoes and allow the area to recover. If unsure, please contact us for advice on 024 76967001 or 02476967030.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 76967001 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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## Patient Information

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#### Document History

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