

## 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 however, the longest part of treatment, and relies on your commitment and help in applying the boots and bar. The visits to hospital will soon become less frequent as you and your child become settled in the routine of wearing the boots. 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.

### **Before the application of the boots and bar**

In the three weeks between the tenotomy operation and the fitting of the boots, it is advisable that you play with your baby's legs by bending both knees up at the same time, so they are used to them moving together. When the boots are applied you can continue this exercise initially whilst your baby gets used to having both legs linked together. In no time at all you will find that they adjust and start kicking both legs at the same time

### **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 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 therefore important to ensure the boots are worn and fitted correctly.



## How long will my child wear the boots and bar?

The boots and bar are to be worn at least 23 hours per day for approximately three months. They can be removed for bathing and dressing (one hour maximum). After three months the boots can be worn for sleeping and napping only, approximately 14 hours per day. By wearing them at naptimes your child will associate all sleep time with wearing the boots, helping them to adjust to treatment. In total the boots are usually worn up until the age of four, or when the bones have sufficiently matured for the foot position to be maintained.

## Will my child need any other special equipment?

No. The use of prams, pushchairs, car seats, high chairs etc. can continue as normal, as the safety strap can go between the legs and the bar.

Clothing with poppers is the best particularly when wearing trousers, so that the boots and bar do not have to be removed too often if changes are required. This is not usually a problem at first, as most baby clothes have poppers. Clothes can be adapted with Velcro fastening if required.

Double layered cotton socks are recommended for use with the boots, these will be provided at your clinic appointment.

## Fitting the boots and bars

The boots will be fitted in clinic they will be set at the correct angle to hold the feet in position. **This should not be altered except in clinic.**

It is most important to make sure that the heel is placed at the very back of the boot and held firmly in place by the heel-retaining strap. The heel needs to touch the bottom of the shoe.

Sometimes the healthcare professional will mark the boot strap to ensure the correct fit is maintained.

This is the most difficult phase for you and your baby, but many professionals believe it is the most important stage and we are here to support.

## Will my child be comfortable in the boots?

Your child may be upset when they first have their boots fitted, this can be helped through play and distraction. If your baby is distressed, check the boots are fitting correctly and check for rubbing or blisters. Do not be tempted to remove the boots or bar, babies usually adapt well within a week of wearing them.

Inspect the skin regularly, at first there may be marks, particularly where the strap fits.

Blistering and sores developing can indicate that the boot is slipping because it is not fitting correctly, so adjust the strap or laces. If this happens then please contact the team for further assessment and management.

## How often do the boots need changing?

There is no set time for boot changes; babies' feet grow at their own individual rate. As the boots are open ended, the length of the foot is not restricted, and it is best to allow the toes to come to the end of the sole before changing. This is particularly so when very small, as the boots will have softened and adapted. Do not forget the feet grow width ways as well as length ways, so you will need to loosen the strap as the foot grows. Please contact the clinic staff if shoes are needed between clinic appointments

## Useful tips

- Make wearing the boots part of the daily routine, putting them on when your child sleeps during the day as well as at night.  
**Remember we aim for 14 hours wear per day.**
- Keep to the routine, we are aware this can be difficult but it is an essential part of your child's treatment.
- The bar may be padded to prevent damage to you, siblings and furniture.

## Patient Information

**Do not hesitate to ask for help we are here to support you**

## Contact Details

**Paediatric Orthopaedic Team 024 7696 7001/024 7696 6918**

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact us on the number above and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

### Document History

Department:	Paediatric Trauma and Orthopaedics
Contact:	02476967001
Updated:	August 2020
Review:	August 2023
Version:	5
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1050/10