An x-ray is taken at six months of age to confirm the hips are developing normally, as the bones are not developed enough to be x-rayed until the baby is about four months old.

The earlier clicky hips are detected and treatment is commenced, the better the outcome. Walking may be delayed or there may be a limp or waddling gait.

If untreated, the hip will develop abnormally leading to arthritis.

SURGERY

Surgery is undertaken when other methods of stabilising the hip have failed, or when a late diagnosis is made. The type of surgery depends very much on each individual case and all details and options will be discussed with you at the time. Occasionally a plaster cast is required to hold the hips in place.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE TALK TO THE STAFF CARING FOR YOU AND YOUR BABY.

FEEDBACK

We encourage feedback and assurance is given that comments will not adversely affect your current or future care.

You can do this:

- through discussion with MidCentral Health staff providing your care
- by completing “Tell us what you think...” pamphlets available from all services
- by contacting our Customer Relations Co-ordinator, PO Box 2056, Palmerston North or phone (06) 350 8980
- by contacting a Health and Disability Commissioner Advocate, phone 0800 112 233.

Compiled by Susan Brougham RCpN
CLICKY HIPS

Congenital Dysplasia of the Hip/Developmental Hip Dysplasia (CDH/DDH) is a diagnosis to describe a hip that has not formed correctly. This may be because the hip socket is too shallow or the femoral head may slip in and out of the socket. If left untreated or undetected, the hip will continue to grow irregularly.

HIP CHECKS

An attempt is made to screen all babies at Palmerston North Hospital by one of the Orthopaedic Consultants or Registrars on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 7.45 am to 8.00 am (excluding public holidays).

If you are discharged before your baby has been seen, or have a home birth, it is important that you attend on one of these days as soon as possible, to have your baby's hips checked. Please report to the Women's Health Day Unit on Level 1, located by the Delivery Suite.

For babies born in Levin, an appointment time will be arranged for a hip check at the Horowhenua Outpatient Department on Wednesday afternoons.

EXAMINATION

If a click or any subluxation (laxity) is detected, this will be discussed with you.

You may be asked to bring your baby to the Orthopaedic Outpatient department for a further hip check within the next few weeks. This is because the baby will absorb relaxing hormones made by the mother to allow delivery.

These hormones can cause laxity of the baby’s hip ligaments allowing extra movement. Re-examination allows a definite decision on treatment as the hip ligaments will tighten and most hips become stable without treatment.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Clicky hips may be detected in 1:1000 births. 1:100 will require treatment.
- Girls are affected more than boys.
- First born.
- Family history.
- The left hip is more often involved (? due to foetal positioning).
- Breech birth.
- Gestation greater than 42 weeks.

TREATMENT

Your baby may be referred for an ultrasound of the hips if any subluxation is detected to assess the hip development.

If your Specialist finds there is instability, your baby may be placed into a brace called a Pavlik Harness to hold the hips in place. The harness is made of a fabric material with a body piece and two separate leg pieces. This is put on in the Orthopaedic Outpatient department. It is generally worn for two to three months to help mould the socket around the hip and stabilise it.

An ultrasound scan may be done while your baby is in the harness. The ultrasound findings will determine the period of time the harness will need to be worn, and your baby will be followed up at the Orthopaedic Outpatient department.