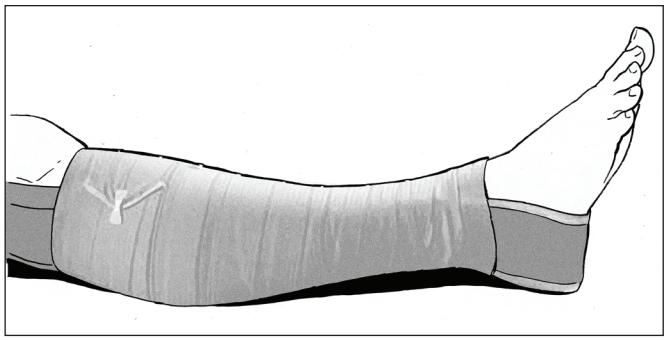
Straight leg Traction

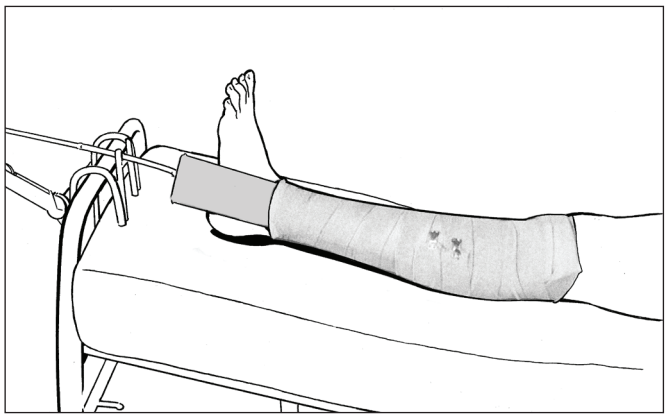
Information for parents and/or caregivers.

Welcome to the Southern Adelaide Local Health Network. This information sheet aims to answer any questions you may have about your child having straight leg traction.

What is straight leg traction?

Straight leg traction is a type of skin traction that provides slow and gentle pulling to guide a broken thigh bone back into place and hold it steady while it heals. It can also be used to rest an injured joint (knee or hip) or provide treatment for other problems of the hip or knee.





Straight Leg traction Application

Traction will be applied in the Emergency Department after your child has been given appropriate pain relief.

A sticky tape will be placed along either side of your child's leg, which is then wrapped with a bandage to keep it in place. A string attached to the foot end of the tape creates a gentle pull via a pulley and weight system that hangs of the end off the bed. Sometimes both legs need to be in traction. This will depend on your child's hip problem/s. Non adhesive straps can be used for older children over 12 years.

The amount of time your child stays in traction will depend on many things and will be decided by the orthopaedic team.

Pain

Your child is usually more comfortable once the traction has been applied. To help keep your child comfortable, the nurse will offer regular pain relief medicine during the first few days and then just when your child needs it.

Your child may have muscle spasms in their broken leg for the few days after the traction has been applied. A muscle spasm looks like a twitching or jumping of the leg and can sometimes wake your child suddenly. Spasms happen when the bones begin to line up again and the muscles are trying to hold the broken bone in place. If you feel that your child is uncomfortable from pain or muscle spasms, please let your child's nurse know.

Safety

Even though your child is secured in the traction, bed sides must be raised when unsupervised to maintain the child's safety.

Daily wash and re-bandage

Your child will have a wash and a change of sheets each day. As your child becomes more comfortable they may be able to help with moving in the bed.

The nurse will guide and assist you if you would like to help wash your child.

Nursing staff will remove and re-apply the outer bandage of the traction daily to check the skin underneath Neurovascular assessment (Circulation check)

Nursing staff will regularly check your child's leg and foot to ensure the traction and bandages are not too tight.

Your child's development

Our diversional nurse or a volunteer will assist in providing suitable toys and stimulation to encourage your child's mental, physical and social development.

Please feel free to bring in your child's favourite toys.

The diversional nurse and volunteers are available Monday to Friday to help keep your child active and stimulated while in the traction.

There is a school teacher available during school terms who will help with keeping track of your child's schoolwork.

Contact Numbers

Flinders Medical Centre
Emergency Department
Telephone: 8204 6065

Orthopaedic Clinic
Telephone: 8204 4787

Private Orthopaedic Surgeon

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Contact number: .....

Appointment date and time: .....

.....

Your next review is: .....

If a referral has been sent to the Orthopaedic Clinic and you do not receive an appointment time within 5 days you will need to call them on the number listed.

Adapted from

Pughes traction consumer information: wch.sa.gov.au

For more information

Women's and Children's Division
Flinders Medical Centre
Bedford Park
South Australia 5042
Telephone: 08 8204 5511

Interpreter

https://creativecommons.org

This document has been reviewed and endorsed by consumers.

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Southern Adelaide
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