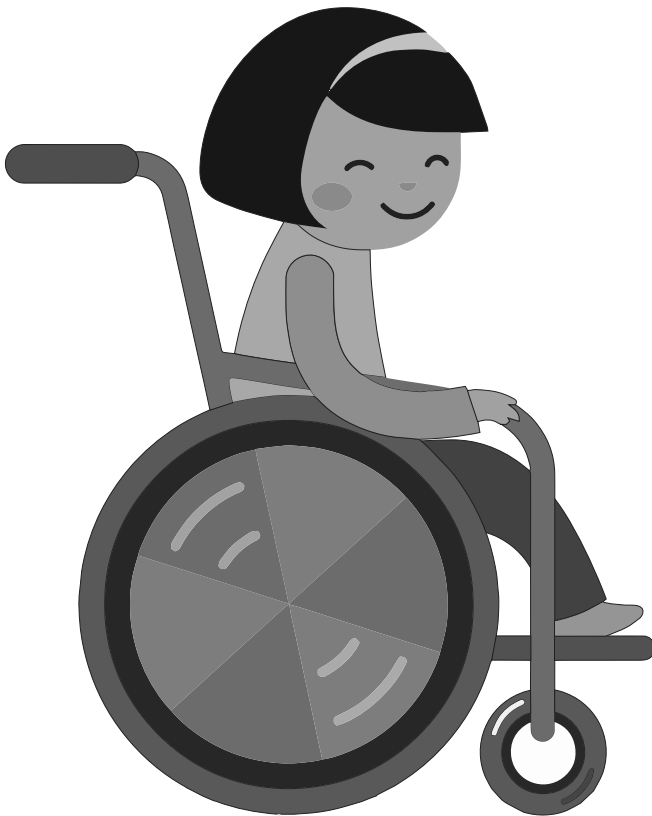


Your Child's Posture Matters

A quick guide for supporting your child's postural care needs whilst in hospital.



What is Postural Care?

Postural care is the term used to describe any intervention intended to protect a person's body shape. It is an important part of care for people who have movement difficulties. Postural care addresses all body positions an individual adopts throughout the day. This can include:

- Specialist seating
- Positioning equipment in bed
- Moving and handling techniques

Why is continuing postural care in hospital important?

Postural care can provide a range of benefits such as decreased pain levels, improved communication, better quality sleep and more independence. Good posture can help prevent:

- Breathing Difficulties
- Muscle shortening
- Bone Deformities
- Swallowing Issues
- Low mood
- Difficulty socialising
- Pain
- Pressure sores

It may also help reduce your child's hospital stay if they come in to hospital.

How positioning may be different in hospital.

Environment

Due to the medical attention that your child needs, some positional changes may need to be adapted due to factors such as medical equipment being in the way.

Staff

Your child may have several healthcare professionals coming to see them and some may not be familiar with your child's personal needs and preferences. Nevertheless, while you are in the hospital, we will regularly speak with you and your child to get to know your child better.

Equipment Availability

In the hospital there may not be the same specialised equipment as you have at home. Postural care is important to us, and we can improvise with positioning your child (such as using extra pillows and towels as an alternative to a sleep system for providing comfort and support for your child in bed). This is usually fine if your child's hospital stay is going to be for a short period.

What can you do to ensure your child's postural care needs are met?

Have a Discussion with Staff

When you arrive at the hospital you should have a discussion with the staff caring for your child about their overall health, postural care needs, preferences and abilities. We also have communication boards for each room called 'What matters to Me' which can be useful for highlighting your child's needs. If your child has a postural passport then it is a good idea to bring this into the hospital with you so that the health professionals caring for your child can use it to gain an understanding of your child and their postural needs.

Take in Equipment

You can bring the postural care equipment your child uses at home into the hospital so they can continue using it as normal. This may include sleep systems, specialist chairs and standing frames, especially if your stay is going to be for several weeks or more. There are services available that may be able to arrange transport of equipment from your home to the hospital (and back). Please ask a member of staff if you would like to find out more about equipment transfer.

Who can help support you and your child during the hospital stay?

Nursing staff

As well as providing medical care to your child and providing personal care, nursing and support staff can help reposition your child safely and assist with hoisting if you need help moving your child.

Physiotherapists

Your child's community physiotherapist may have provided you with advice and education surrounding postural care. If your child has a postural management programme that you follow at home, you should continue this whilst in hospital where possible. The hospital physiotherapists can provide additional support or adaptations where needed and will be happy to assist.

Occupational Therapists

The occupational therapists in the hospital are there to support your child in carrying out activities that they would normally do at home. They can also support you with equipment needs and specialist seating. If there are any concerns regarding a change in your child's functional ability, they can discuss with your child's community occupational therapist (if they have one), to make sure all the right equipment is in place at home.

If you would like to speak to a hospital physiotherapist and, or occupational therapist, please speak to one of the nurses on the ward.