

## A THERAPY GUIDE FOR YOUR BABY

# ERB'S PALSY

Erb's Palsy is the most common type of brachial plexus injury seen in children. Injury most frequently occurs during birth and is caused by stretch, compression, or tearing of nerves in a baby's shoulder and/or arm. Symptoms associated with Erb's Palsy include decreased flexibility in muscles of the upper extremity and neck, changes in sensation, and weakness of arm and hand muscles.

Exercises to improve range of motion, strength, and sensory awareness should be initiated early on in the diagnosis of Erb's palsy. For infants, much of this progress can be achieved by facilitated age-appropriate play.

Impairment can vary depending on the severity of injury to the nerve root and levels of nerve roots involved. Your physiotherapist will provide guidance on which exercises are appropriate for your child and instruction about the frequency of exercise.

### STRETCHING EXERCISES

- Gently stretch tight muscles in your baby's neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist, and fingers. Check with your physiotherapist on which stretches would be most suitable for your baby.
- Exercises should be performed with your baby lying on his or her back when they are relaxed or even napping so muscles are loose and the best stretch can be achieved.
- Perform stretches multiple times per day as part of a daily routine. It can be helpful to have a regular schedule, such as completing stretches after every nappy change.



### STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

- Assist your child in achieving typical movement patterns such as reaching for objects or holding objects with both hands.
- Encourage use of affected arm by placing toys or other desired objects on your baby's affected side.
- Hold your baby with the affected side out so he or she can gain strength while interacting with the environment.
- Tummy time with weight-bearing through elbows or hands, depending on your child's developmental stage, promotes strengthening and stretching of your baby's upper extremities and neck muscles. You may need to assist your baby in sustaining his or her arm in a weight-bearing position.

### SENSORY ACTIVITIES

- Sensory loss can lead to neglect of the affected arm. Facilitating the participation of your child's arm in daily activities lets your child know that their arm is a functional part of the body.
- To increase sensory awareness, provide gentle stroking or massage to your child's arm with a variety of textures, such as a soft blanket or 'rough' tea towel. These techniques can be performed to the shoulder, arm or hand for several minutes daily.
- Encourage your child to grasp with the involved hand to help them learn to perceive information on the texture, size, and temperature of objects.

If your baby has suffered an injury due to poor medical care, it is important you are able to make a claim for compensation to cope with the financial consequences. Get in touch with JMW Solicitors today, call on 0345 646 0392 or email us at [erbspalsy@jmw.co.uk](mailto:erbspalsy@jmw.co.uk)