

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references (if relevant) for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202502-03-EP
Created: January 2021/ Revised: February 2025 /
Review Date: February 2027

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS, PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS

Paediatric Physiotherapy



Erb's palsy

Early handling and exercise advice

Use this page for your notes

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

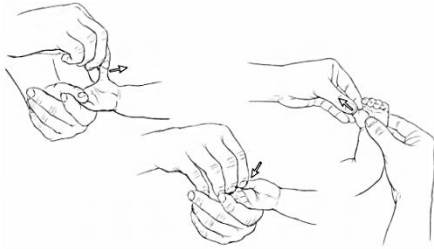
.....

.....

.....

.....

3. **Thumb abduction and adduction.** Hold baby's hand with one hand and their thumb with your other hand. Gently move the thumb away from side to side.



Your baby may have reduced feeling in their arm. Gently touching baby's hand and arm can help to increase their awareness of their arm.

4. **Stroking.** Gently stroke your hand up baby's hand and arm. You may also use a variety of textures against their skin, e.g. initially soft velvet toys, or a towel that is slightly rougher.

Please note that some babies may not tolerate this initially, especially if they are still irritable from birth.

Physiotherapy referral

Your baby will be referred for ongoing outpatient paediatric physiotherapy.

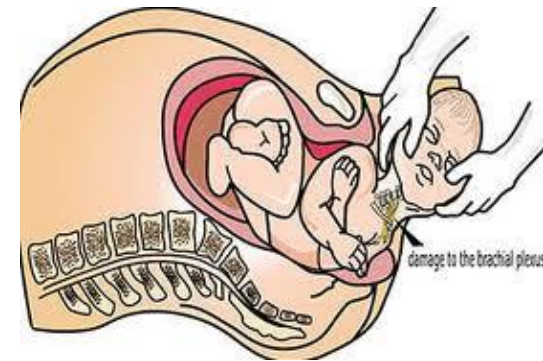
The physiotherapist will monitor baby's progress and to start additional exercises when your baby is ready.

What is Erb's palsy?

During a difficult delivery the nerves from the neck to the arm can be stretched or injured. These nerves give movement and feeling to the arm. As a result there can be complete or partial paralysis of the arm.

Erb's palsy, also known as obstetric brachial plexus palsy, varies in severity depending on the extent of the damage to the nerves.

Some babies recover on their own, however, some may require specialist intervention.



Baby's affected arm often rests in a 'waiters tip' position.



Positioning and handling

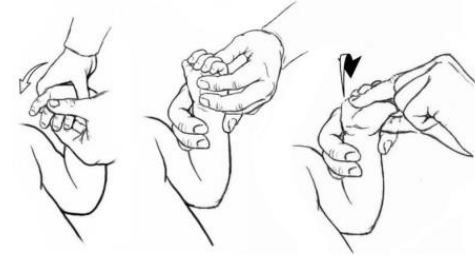
Early positioning and handling is important to protect the injured nerves in the neck, to allow any inflammation and swelling around the nerves to recover:

- The arm should be well supported with the hand, elbow and shoulder in a neutral position at all times.
- A rolled up towel can help to keep the arm in a neutral position when baby is on their back.
- Avoid moving the head and neck too much initially, to avoid pulling on the inflamed nerves.
- Keep baby's arm close to the body when feeding and holding.
- Don't be afraid to handle and touch baby's arm with care.
- Do not pull on the affected arm or lift baby under their armpits.
- When *dressing* – **start** with **affected** arm.
- When *undressing* – **start** with **unaffected** arm.
- When bathing, hold baby's affected arm close to the body and carefully dry under their arm and in skin folds.

Exercises

Complete the following exercises gently on baby's affected arm to help prevent them from becoming stiff. Repeat each exercise 10 times, holding each exercise for 3-5 seconds. Repeat these exercises several times per day.

1. **Wrist flexion and extension.** Keep baby's forearm still and in neutral with one of your hands and hold their hand with yours. Gently move baby's hand forwards and backwards.



2. **Finger flexion and extension.** Hold baby's hand at their wrist with one hand and their fingers with your other hand. Gently bend and then straighten baby's fingers.

