

What do I need to do?

Give your child regular anti-inflammatories, for example ibuprofen (or paracetamol if they cannot have ibuprofen). Rest your child. Your child needs to return to hospital if:

- ❖ They develop a high temperature.
- ❖ They develop worsening pain.

Does this condition come back again?

Irritable hip can re-occur but this is very rare. Irritable hip is unlikely to cause long term problems.

Emergency Department

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Monklands	01698 752005
Wishaw General	01698 366630
NHS 24	111

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Irritable Hip

Information for patients
Accident and Emergency Department



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What is irritable hip?

Irritable hip is an inflammation of the lining of the hip joint. It is the most common cause of hip pain in young children. This can affect boys and girls of any age, although it is more common in younger children. Boys are usually affected more than girls.

What is the cause?

The exact cause is unknown, but it often follows a mild illness such as a cold or tummy upset, or a minor injury.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms usually develop quickly. These are pain in the hip or groin area, or sometimes pain in the thigh or the knee. Children will limp or refuse to walk. Other than these symptoms the child is usually well.

How is it diagnosed?

There is no specific test for irritable hip. It is diagnosed on the history from you and examination of your child. Occasionally a blood-test or x-ray may be required to rule out other causes of a limp.

What is the treatment?

At first you should rest your child and give them regular anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen. If your child is unable to take ibuprofen because of asthma, or because they cannot tolerate it, then paracetamol should be given. We advise that children should be completely rested at home and be kept off nursery or school. They should avoid games and exercise for a period of 5 to 7 days. After 5 to 7 days your child will be reviewed in the Emergency Department clinic.

What happens then?

If your child is better no further treatment is required. Your child should continue to avoid sports for another 1 to 2 weeks to prevent the symptoms from returning. If your child has only recently started walking they may have a slightly altered walk for a short period of time.

If your child's symptoms are persisting they may have to have blood tests and/or x-rays (if they haven't had these already). We may request an ultrasound scan of their hip.

In a very few cases children may have to be referred to see a specialist if the symptoms are failing to settle.