

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Caregivers:

1) What is hip surveillance?

Hip surveillance is a plan for regular check-ups to watch for signs that your child's hip may be moving out of joint. This is called hip displacement.

2) Why is hip surveillance important?

Hip surveillance is important for children with cerebral palsy because hip displacement is common (1 in 3 children with cerebral palsy will have hip displacement) and it can happen without any signs or symptoms. Hip surveillance allows for hip displacement to be found early so that it can be treated before the hip becomes dislocated (fully out of joint).

3) What happens with hip surveillance?

There are 2 parts to hip surveillance: clinical exams and x-rays. These are both done at regularly scheduled times to detect hip displacement. A clinical exam of the hips is done by your child's physiotherapist and only takes a few minutes. It should not be painful for your child. An x-ray is done at your local hospital. How often your child needs a clinical exam and an x-ray is dependent upon their ability to move themselves (gross motor function).

4) What if my child does not have a diagnosis of cerebral palsy?

A diagnosis of cerebral palsy is not required to be enrolled in the Child Health BC Hip Surveillance Program. Some children do not have a diagnosis and are having tests to find the cause of their condition. If the way your child moves is the same as described for children with cerebral palsy, they should be enrolled while awaiting test results.

Children diagnosed with a chromosomal, genetic, or metabolic condition may also be described as having cerebral palsy. Please discuss this with your child's physiotherapist or doctor or contact the Program Coordinator.

5) When my child is referred to the Hip Surveillance Program, will they need to be seen at BC Children's Hospital?

No, your child will receive hip surveillance in their home community. If your child needs to be seen by a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon, they will be referred to a surgeon in your own Health Authority or to BC Children's Hospital.

6) How will I receive the results?

You will receive a letter in the mail when your child is enrolled in the program and whenever they have a clinical exam or x-ray. Your child's physiotherapist and doctors will also get these letters. You will be asked to tell us who should receive these letters when your child is enrolled in the program.

7) Can the x-ray be done anywhere?

The x-ray must be done at your local hospital so it can be viewed by the Hip Surveillance team at BC Children's Hospital. You will be told where the x-ray can be done whenever an x-ray is recommended. Contact the Program Coordinator if you wish to have the x-ray completed somewhere else.

8) Should I be concerned about my child having x-rays on a regular basis?

We understand that exposure to x-ray radiation is a worry for many families. The number of x-rays recommended as part of hip surveillance is safe for your child.

We are all exposed to radiation every day on Earth from natural sources. This is called background radiation. The amount of radiation we are exposed to is measured in millisievert or mSv. In one year, the daily exposure of background radiation adds up to about 3 mSv. A single x-ray of the pelvis and hips has a radiation dose of 0.05 to 0.7 mSv. A flight from Toronto to Vancouver results in 0.03 mSv of exposure.

In Canada, the maximum safe dose for people who work around radiation is 100mSv over 5 years. A child who gets 2 hip x-rays each year from the time they are an infant until they stop growing, would be exposed to between 3 and 20 mSv of radiation. This amount of radiation exposure is far below the level where there is a concern of increased risk of cancer.

9) What happens if my child needs to be referred to a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon?

The Program Coordinator will call you if your child needs to see a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon. Your child will be referred to a surgeon in their Health Authority or at BC Children's Hospital. You will be contacted by the surgeon's office about an appointment.

10) My child already sees an orthopaedic surgeon. Do they still need to be enrolled in the program?

Yes, children who are followed by an orthopaedic surgeon should be enrolled. This will ensure that surveillance is not missed. Your child's orthopaedic surgeon may order an x-ray more often than the Hip Surveillance Program guidelines if they feel it is necessary.

11) My child does not have a physiotherapist. Can they still be enrolled in the program?

Yes, your child can still be enrolled if they do not have a physiotherapist. Please contact the program coordinator by emailing hyps@cw.bc.ca or calling 604-875-2345 (toll free in BC: 1-888-300-3088) ext. 4099.