Transient Synovitis of the Hip

Transient synovitis is a childhood condition involving transient arthritis of the hip. It is called transient because the problem goes away with time. It usually improves after a few days, but it can last up to a couple of weeks. It is also called toxic synovitis. It most frequently occurs in children between the ages 4 to 10 years. Boys are affected twice as frequently as girls.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms are usually mild and often follow a mild illness. Aside from hip pain and a limp, the child is not usually ill. Symptoms may include:

- Hip or groin pain (on one side only).
- Limp with or without pain.
- Thigh pain (on one side).
- Knee pain (on one side).
- Low grade fever, less than 100.4° F (38.0 °C) taken by mouth.
- Crying at night (younger children).

CAUSES

The exact cause of transient synovitis is unknown. It may be due to a reaction to a viral infection. Many children with transient synovitis had an upper respiratory or other infection shortly before developing hip symptoms. Injury to the hip might trigger the problem as well. Post vaccine and drug-related reactions may also cause the condition.

DIAGNOSIS

Your caregiver may want to do some or all of these tests:

- Blood tests.
- Urine tests.
- X-rays of the hip.
- Ultrasound of the hip.
- Needle aspiration of the hip if fluid is noted in the joint.
- MRI.

TREATMENT

Treatment of transient synovitis is usually done at home. In some cases, the child may have to stay at a hospital to control pain or evaluate the hip for possible infection. Medicines that treat inflammation may help control pain. Only take medicines as directed by your caregiver. Sometimes leg traction using weights and pulleys at home is needed.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat and massage of the area may be suggested.
- Bed rest may be needed for up to 7-10 days, if possible. Resting on the couch in a comfortable position is a possible option.
- Avoid putting weight on the affected leg.
- Avoid full activity until the limp and pain have gone away almost completely.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has pain in other joints.
- New unexplained symptoms occur.
- Pain is not controlled with medicines prescribed.
- Pain gets gradually worse or fails to improve.

- Pain returns after a period of time with no pain.
- Any joint becomes red and/or swollen.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has severe pain.
- Your child has a temperature over 100.4.° F (38.0 °C)
- Your child refuses to walk.

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