

Brachial Plexus Injury in Children

Brachial Plexus Injury

The brachial plexus is a group of nerves that sends signals from the spine to the shoulder, arm and hand. These nerves control the movement of your child's arm.

An injury to these nerves may affect muscles in the shoulder, arm, wrist or hand. Brachial plexus injuries vary, depending on where or how the nerves were injured.

Brachial plexus injuries are also known as Erb's palsy, Klumpke's palsy, Brachial plexus palsy, Erb-Duchenne's palsy, Horner's syndrome or shoulder dystocia.

Causes

A brachial plexus injury can be caused by:

- shoulder trauma (stretching or tearing of the nerves)
- inflammation (swelling)
- tumors
- childbirth.

Symptoms

Damage to the brachial plexus can cause symptoms such as:

- a limp or paralyzed arm
- lack of muscle control in the arm, hand or wrist
- lack of feeling or sensation in the arm or hand.

Occupational Therapy

Your child will work with an occupational therapist to:

- help prevent their injury from getting worse
- help prevent their arm from becoming stiff or hard to move
- increase their arm strength and awareness.

Care at Home

The occupational therapist will teach your child gentle stretching exercises to do at home.

You will play an important role in your child's care. Support from family will make a difference in your child's treatment.

At home, you can:

- learn about your child's injury
- monitor your child's progress
- let others know the best way to hold and move your child
- encourage awareness of your child's injury
- increase your child's awareness of their arm
- avoid lifting your child from under the arms. This will help prevent further injury.