

Spasticity Management Program

Treatments to relieve spasticity

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What is spasticity?

Spasticity is one of the main causes of stiff and awkward movement. Spasticity happens when there are problems with the parts of the brain or spinal cord that control muscle movement. When these parts of the brain or spinal cord do not form correctly or are injured, there can be problems with coordination, walking and other movement. When the brain and spinal cord do not work as usual, movements can be jerky, stiff or painful.

Spasticity is only one of the kinds of motor control problems seen in children with cerebral palsy. It may or may not be the main problem for your child. Abnormal development or injury to other parts of the brain can cause dystonia (diss-TOE-nee-uh) or other problems with body movement. Dystonia is the second most common movement disorder. The Spasticity Management Program also treats patients with dystonia.

Who will my child see when we come to the Spasticity Management Clinic?

The Spasticity Management Program is made up of a team of healthcare providers who work together to help your child. The members of the team are doctors, nurse practitioners, physical therapists and occupational therapists. All of them have special training and experience in caring for children with most common causes of spasticity, like cerebral palsy.

How can I get ready to bring my child to the clinic?

You know your child best, so it is important for us hear from you. It is very helpful for us to know what you have noticed about your child's movement. We will ask you detailed questions about your child's medical history, health and current activities.

Before you come to the clinic, please mail or fax these things to the clinic so we can learn more about your child:

- Medical records from your child's primary healthcare provider
- Reports from your child's physical or occupational therapist
- Records of any surgeries
- Any images from CT scans, MRIs, or x-rays of the spine and hips that your child has had (Please bring the actual images, not just the reports.)

The address and fax number of the clinic are listed at the end of this flyer.

Your child's physical or occupational therapist is welcome to come to the clinic with you if you would like.

What can I expect when I bring my child to the clinic?

The first time you come to the clinic, your child will have an evaluation. This means that the healthcare team will listen to your concerns, ask lots of questions, examine your child and see what treatment is needed. At the evaluation, the healthcare team will include at least one doctor. The appointment will usually be about 3 ½ hours long.

Our team members will check your child to see what kind of muscle tightness they have and how intense it is. The team will also check to see how much that tightness affects your child's ability to do things that require moving (functional skills).

After we see your child, we will meet as a team to talk about options for treatment. Then, one of our team members will meet with you to talk about the options to manage your child's spasticity and related movement problems.

What can I expect after the evaluation?

Some children's needs are complex. Sometimes, this means that we may need to do more tests or assessments. If this is true for your child, we will work with you to make appointments for these tests.

We will talk to you in detail about the kinds of tests your child needs. We

will answer any questions you have about the tests. Some of the things we may measure or test for are:

- Your child's functional skills
- The way your child walks (their gait)
- Images of your child's head or spine
- Other tests, if needed

What treatments will we recommend?

The best treatment or management plan depends on your child's own needs. The most common options are listed here. Sometimes, a combination of these treatments might work best. Other children may not need any of these treatments.

- Physical therapy and occupational therapy (PT & OT)
- Casting and bracing
- Medicine
- Nerve blocks/muscle injections (e.g. botulinum toxin)
- Orthopedic surgery
- Selective dorsal rhizotomy (SDR)
- Intrathecal baclofen pump

Your child's healthcare team will explain all of these treatment options to you, and will answer any questions you have about them.

Research/new techniques

Research is a way for us to develop better treatments for children with spasticity and other problems with movement. We are working on several research projects.

The projects that we are working on are approved by a special committee at Children's, called the Institutional Review Board, or the IRB. This is a group that protects the rights and welfare of children in research.

Your child may be able to participate in research. To take part, you and your child must first want to participate — it is totally up to you. Research projects usually have certain requirements to define who is able to participate.

We will tell you about any research project that might fit your child's condition. We will need your written permission to have your child take part in any study. Once again, it is totally voluntary, and you can decide that you do not want your child to participate if that is what you prefer. The decision to be in a research study or not will not affect your child's healthcare at Children's.

To Learn More

- Spasticity Management Clinic 206-987-2210
- Dr. McLaughlin 206-987-2210
- Your child’s healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child’s nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.
- For Deaf and hard of hearing callers 206-987-2280 (TTY)

Members of the Spasticity Management Program

John F. McLaughlin, MD	Professor, Pediatrics
William O. Walker, MD	Professor, Pediatrics
Samuel L. Browd, MD, PhD	Asst. Professor, Neurosurgery
Kit Song, MD	Assoc. Professor, Orthopedics
Ross Hays, MD	Professor, Rehab. Medicine
Greg Schmale, MD.	Assoc. Professor, Orthopedics
Kristie Bjornson, PhD, PT	Asst Professor, Pediatrics
Signe Carlos, ARNP	Nurse Practitioner
Nadine Nielsen, ARNP	Nurse Practitioner
Eileen Reichert, ARNP	Nurse Practitioner
Elizabeth Limbacher, ARNP	Nurse Practitioner
Laura Lee, ARNP	Nurse Practitioner
Francine Won, PT	Physical Therapist
Cathy Graubert, PT	Physical Therapist
Leslie Vogel, PT	Physical Therapist
Wendy McGrath, OTR	Occupational Therapist
Peggy Smith, OTR	Occupational Therapist
Ana Kobayashi, MPH	Research Associate

How to get a consultation in the Spasticity Management Clinic

A referral is required to come to the Spasticity Management Clinic. If you are interested in making an appointment for your child at the clinic but do not have a referral, please call the number below. We can talk to you about what steps to take to get a referral.

How to contact us

Spasticity Management Clinic Address:
M/S A-7938
PO Box 5371
4800 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105

206-987-2210
Fax number: 206-987-3824

Seattle Children’s offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children’s will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children’s. However, your child’s needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child’s healthcare provider.

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