



steps

We don't take walking for granted

Emilia

Diagnosed aged 7 months
Treatment to date: Closed
Reduction, 6 Months in a
Hip Spica

Emilia's Story

Emilia is my first and only child. She was born just under two years ago and my pregnancy was quite normal to begin with. After 20 weeks, I developed the condition Pre-eclampsia and she was induced and delivered by Ventouse at 38 weeks. Pre-eclampsia had been a problem since twenty weeks and this was evident as Emilia's birth weight was only 5lb 3oz. Emilia was also born with jaundice and spent 36 hours on a bili-bed in the hospital. Emilia was given the normal newborn checks and her hips were checked immediately following delivery. In fact, due to her jaundice and small size Emilia was subjected to many medical checks in the three days following her birth.

On our discharge, Emilia seemed to grow and progress well and when we reached our 6 week check, we were confident that all was well. Unfortunately, at about this time Emilia had an accident that confined us once more to hospital overnight. During this period, the emphasis was on



me and what I may have done rather than potential injuries to Emilia. In retrospect this becomes very important.

At her first check, my husband and I had concerns that Emilia only seemed to look one way and her head was becoming disfigured as a result. Being our first child, we just assumed this was normal and somehow corrected itself later in life. The doctor who checked her, showed some concern but told us to 'see what happened'. My husband is not the type to let such things lie and so begun our first intensive internet search. He quickly realised that our daughter had a large lump in her neck and this seemed to be causing the problem. He 'diagnosed' this as Torticollis and on our prompt return to the doctor this was confirmed and she was referred to physiotherapy. At this point, no one realised the link between Torticollis and DDH.

Emilia began physiotherapy aged 13 weeks and we were given a series of exercises to perform several times a day which were done diligently. The results of these stretches were obvious quite soon and her neck movement became loose and more normal.

To help with Emilia's head shape, I took her regularly to see a cranial osteopath and I cannot honestly say whether this helped or not, but together rapid results were seen.

Emilia's physiotherapist was pleased with her progress but reluctant to discharge Emilia from her care as she appeared asymmetrical. We were sent back to our GP at 4 months for a consultation, but he was reluctant to 'irradiate such a young child'. Back to the physio and still no discharge.

As Emilia grew, her symptoms became obvious. She was slow to sit and often slouched and fell to the side. As a small child, her legs were difficult to examine, but as she grew they were obviously not the same length.

The situation showed no improvement and after being sent back to our GP he eventually diagnosed Scoliosis and we were referred to Stanmore Orthopaedic Hospital. Our appointment with the consultant came quickly. Emilia had x-rays and we were told her spine was perfectly fine, but her right

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hip was completely dislocated. She was then referred to the hip specialist at Stanmore.

Like many on the STEPS forum, we were devastated and angry as Emilia had been through so many medical hands from the age of 6 weeks and NO ONE knew the link between Torticollis and DDH. An internet search revealed this link to us within 30 minutes. I used this fact to my advantage and saw the hip consultant within 3 weeks. Two weeks later Emilia had a closed reduction (aged 8 months) and was placed into frog plaster.



This was the most difficult time of my life and coping was not enhanced by people staring in the street. Emilia just about fitted into our Mamas and papas Pramette but was propped up by cushions and tied in with a pretty scarf. Her feet stuck out over the edges and I was told on numerous occasions to tuck her feet in before they were bent, and your baby should be a gymnast. I know people were being kind, but I really was not in the frame of mind to hear this.

I returned to work during this period and Emilia was well cared for by our child minder. They were published in the STEPS magazine last Autumn. Emilia's change of cast and eventual removal was straightforward and x-rays following the procedure showed that her sockets were shallow. Having been

through her operation and care, this was very worrying indeed.

Time progressed and eventually her x-rays showed that her development was normal for her age. She was eventually discharged from her physiotherapist and we are currently on 6 month check ups and so far so good.

We were lucky as Emilia was diagnosed relatively early, but this should have been sooner. Emilia was in plaster and abductor brace from the age of 8 months to 14 months. She walked at 17 months and now aged almost 22 months there is no stopping her.

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Our story has a happy ending (we hope) and despite its huge difficulty and emotional turmoil, well worth it.



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