

# Let's Talk About Hips This April

hip dysplasia; developmental dysplasia of the hip; infant hip dysplasia; health promotion

8 infants a day are diagnosed with hip dysplasia in Australia. Despite this, the likelihood of a parent being aware of the condition, prior to a diagnosis of it for their child, is only 57%. This limited awareness is contributing to the rising number of those diagnosed late with this potentially life changing condition.

Hip dysplasia, also known as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH), occurs when the ball and socket of the hip do not fit together in their 'normal' position. Sometimes this is due to abnormal development and/or lack of growth of the hip joint. It can result in months — and in some cases years — of medical treatment. Left undiagnosed it's one of the leading causes of early-onset arthritis of the hip and possibly, the need for a hip replacement; it is a significant public health issue. Treatment is optimised when diagnosis occurs within the first 3 months of life.

Sarah Twomey, a Perth occupational therapist and mother of two children impacted by hip dysplasia, established the not-for-profit organisation Healthy Hips Australia, and the Healthy Hips Week initiative, to improve awareness, support and early diagnosis for the condition. Her work is supported by the Australian Orthopaedic teams at the Royal Children's Hospital (Melbourne), Perth Children's Hospital (Perth) and Women's & Children's Hospital (Adelaide). Professor Nicole Williams, Head of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Women's & Children's Hospital Adelaide, is a Board member of Healthy Hips Australia.

Sarah says, "Parents are the best advocates for their children. Many don't even realise that all children should be having their hips routinely checked until 3.5 years of age. Arming parents with the knowledge about the risk factors for, and potential signs of, this condition means they can help their child to be diagnosed as early as possible".

Nicole adds, "Never miss an opportunity to check the hips". "Back in the 1980s and 1990s – when we did do a very careful examination of babies' hips – we were very good at detecting dislocated hips clinically. But now that we are increasingly relying on ultrasound, I think people are assuming that babies with risk factors are going to get ultrasounds, and assuming that babies that don't have risk factors are at very low risk, and neither of these assumptions are necessarily true". "My team is conducting a systematic review in an effort to inform future Australian guidelines."

The fourth annual Healthy Hips Week runs from 1-7 April 2019. All parents and parents- to-be are being urged to educate themselves about the risk factors for and potential signs of hip dysplasia, and to ensure their children's hips are checked not only at birth, but at 1-4 weeks, 6-8 weeks, 6-9 months, 12-months, and then at normal health reviews until 3.5 years of age. For more information about hip dysplasia visit: [healthyhipsaustralia.org.au](http://healthyhipsaustralia.org.au)

## MEDIA CONTACT

For further information and interview opportunities with Sarah Twomey, Nicole Williams, or parents of children affected by hip dysplasia please contact Sarah.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Healthy Hips Week 1-7 April 2019

Key Messages

## Contacts

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