

# Lakeview Community Wellness Center Orthopaedic Connection

## Transient Synovitis in Children

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.  
Orthopaedic Surgeon

### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

This is for all of you parents and grandparents out there who have small children in the family. Up to age five, let's say. The rest of you who are not connected to small children of this age can take a week off (if you want to!).

### **Synovitis**

It is the term which describes a condition in which the hip membrane that lines the hip becomes inflamed and produces too much fluid. It is technically a type of inflammatory arthritis.

### **Cause**

Basically unknown. Mild trauma to a tender little ball and socket is one theory. Another one is viral infection, but we really can't be sure of that. Boys are affected three times as often as girls.

### **Onset**

Typically the child is fine. Then wakes up from a nap or in the morning and starts limping or won't put any weight on the foot. Sometimes it is very hard to localize that the pain is actually coming from the hip.

### **Exam**

When I examine the hip there is always decreased movement. This causes pain in the groin or thigh if the child will tell me where they hurt. Some children deny pain, but the limp is obvious. Most kids have no fever. They usually don't look very sick.

### **What Else Could It Be?**

- Bacterial hip infection
- Perthes Disease
- Rheumatic fever

### **How I Diagnose It**

- Take the temperature
- Carefully examine the leg and hip
- X-ray of the hip
- Lab studies (blood)

### **Treatment**

If there is the slightest suspicion this could be a bacterial infection, I would arrange hospitalization and aspirate the hip joint and begin antibiotics.

If the hip joint culture is normal and no bacteria are found you can breathe easier as it is not from infection.

I sometimes use traction on the painful leg.

**Outcome**

The symptoms usually clear up in a few days. The child may continue to limp though for several more days.

If no fever is present we continue to watch things carefully for any changes. Eventually the child will begin to put weight on the foot and walk normally.

Trying to decide if it is more serious than transient synovitis is tricky. You should not try to figure this out on your own. If a mistake is made the hip can be destroyed by infection. Seek help!

Please remember that anyone can make an appointment to see Dr. Haverbush at his office in Alma, at 315 Warwick Dr., across from Gratiot Medical Center. Call 989-463-6092 to make an appointment.

And don't forget every article I have written for Lakeview Area News is on my Website, [www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com). Check it out. I specialize in you.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush