Joint Hypermobility

Information for children, parents and carers

Joint Hypermobility

A guide to symptoms, treatment and recovery



Understanding the condition

Joint hypermobility means joints move further than usual. Some children also have pain, fatigue or repeated injuries. Symptomatic hypermobility needs assessment and a plan suited to the child.

Supporting your child

Many children stay active with support. Physiotherapy focuses on strength, posture and movement control. Activity choices, footwear and pacing can help manage symptoms and reduce injuries.

Symptoms and assessment

Understanding the cause and when to seek help

Who is affected?

Joint flexibility is common in children and may run in families. It is more common in girls. Extra flexibility alone does not describe how much pain or support a child may need.

Possible symptoms

Joint pain after activity, repeated sprains or dislocations, muscle weakness and fatigue. Some children are clumsy or develop movement skills later; flat feet, poor posture or back pain may occur.

Other concerns

Some children have tendon problems or other symptoms, occasionally including digestive or bladder issues. Tell the clinician about symptoms affecting school, sleep or everyday activities.

Assessment

A doctor or physiotherapist checks joint movement and associated symptoms. A flexibility measure such as the Beighton score may be used. Tests or imaging may help exclude other conditions when needed.

When to ask for help

Seek review for persistent or severe pain, frequent dislocations or injuries, increasing fatigue, or difficulty managing daily activities. An individual plan should focus on your child’s symptoms.

Key message

Many children stay active with support. Physiotherapy focuses on strength, posture and movement control. Activity choices, footwear and pacing can help manage symptoms and reduce injuries.

Treatment and daily care

Activity guided by your child's healthcare team

Before starting activity

A physiotherapist should select exercises for your child. Build strength and control within a comfortable range, rather than practising extreme flexibility.



Activity guidance

Strength: follow the prescribed programme for joint support.
Control: practise the movement technique taught by the therapist.
Activity: swimming or cycling may be suitable low-impact options.
Pacing: balance activity with rest and adjust for symptoms.

Important precautions

Avoid activities likely to injure unstable joints and do not force stretches. Ask for review if pain persists, joints dislocate repeatedly or fatigue limits daily life.

Treatment and next steps

Caring for your child and finding support

Physiotherapy

A tailored programme strengthens muscles around joints, improves posture and develops movement control. Regular review helps adapt exercises to symptoms, function and progress.

Managing pain and fatigue

Pain relief may be used as advised by a clinician. Warmth or massage may ease discomfort. If stretching is advised, keep it gentle and individualised. Balance activities with rest when symptoms increase.

Footwear, support and activity

Supportive shoes can help. Orthotics may be used for symptomatic flat feet and temporary braces for unstable joints if recommended. Choose suitable low-impact activities and avoid high-risk injury situations.

Questions or concerns?

Contact your doctor or physiotherapist for persistent or severe joint pain, frequent dislocations or injuries, increasing fatigue or difficulty with daily activities. Education and support help children remain active.

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