

# transient synovitis

Transient synovitis (also known as toxic synovitis) is a very common cause of temporary hip and leg pain in children. Any joint can be affected by transient synovitis. Most often, it only involves the hip joint. It typically occurs when children are three to 10 years old. It is more common in boys than girls. The hip pain that children feel during transient synovitis is the result of inflammation (swelling) around the hip joint.

## **what causes transient synovitis?**

The exact cause of the swelling is unknown. But, it is thought to be brought on by a virus or a reaction to an infection somewhere in the body. Children may have recently had or currently have an upper respiratory infection, a runny nose, vomiting, diarrhea or a throat or ear infection. They may have a low-grade fever, but often no fever occurs.

## **what are the signs or symptoms?**

Children, without a known injury, will begin to complain of pain in one hip or leg. Some will refuse to put any weight on the leg. Other children may only walk on their tip toe or may limp. Frequently the child will restrict motion at the hip. Some patients will complain of pain when they try to stand after resting or sitting for some time.

## **how is transient synovitis diagnosed?**

Usually the diagnosis is made by history and physical exam, and further testing is not necessary. However, sometimes the provider may order tests to be sure the pain is not the result of a more serious cause. Tests may include laboratory blood work, X-ray, ultrasound or MRI.

## **how is it treated?**

Treatment for transient synovitis includes rest and anti-inflammatories. Your child should avoid putting weight on the leg while they still have pain. Your child should avoid participating in activities until they have made a full recovery and have been released by their provider.

Anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Motrin®/Advil®) or naproxen (Aleve®/Naprosyn®) help to reduce swelling, inflammation and pain. Your provider can discuss proper dosing with you. Massage and applying heat may also help your child to feel better.

Most symptoms begin to improve in one to two days and have completely resolved in one to two weeks. Less commonly, some children may have mild symptoms that persist for four to five weeks. The majority of patients have no long-term effects from transient synovitis. Transient synovitis may come back. If it does, it is usually within six months of the first diagnosis.

