

## **SWADDLING OBSESSION NEEDS RE-THINKING WARNS HIP DYSPLASIA EXPERTS**

Australia's increasing incidence of hip dysplasia in infants has orthopaedic surgeons and health promotion charity Healthy Hips Australia calling for a change in the popular culture of swaddling.

Developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH) is a common condition that health professionals aim to diagnose early in babies. 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. Despite this, parent awareness of DDH and factors influencing it in Australia is limited.

Sarah Twomey, Founder of Healthy Hips Australia, and International Advisor to the International Hip Dysplasia Institute, explains that there are many benefits to swaddling during the first months of life, but wrapping babies too tightly could be doing more harm than good.

“It provides security and comfort and aides in settling and establishing sleep patterns. However, research indicates swaddling can increase the risk for developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH). DDH is a common childhood condition where the hip joint does not fit in the ‘normal’ position due to abnormal development and/or lack of growth of the joint's ball and socket.”

Sarah says “When swaddling your baby, you should allow room around the hips for movement. The legs should be free to move into the natural frog position.”

Sarah pre-empts the ‘fear-mongering’ response to this change in recommendation from health professionals. She says, “I was bewildered when my eldest daughter's two-month stint in a hip harness turned into a two-year ordeal”. While her youngest daughter's journey was less stressful, Sarah has become all too familiar with the need to assist hip dysplasia-affected families who are overwhelmed and uninformed about the condition. “Even as someone who works in the healthcare system, I found it hard to navigate the experience of DDH with my children. That inspired me to launch Healthy Hips Australia.”

Patron of Healthy Hips Australia, Bruce Foster, applauds the promotion of safe swaddling for healthy hip development, as a part of the hip dysplasia awareness initiative being undertaken by Healthy Hips Australia. As the current deputy director of the department of orthopaedic surgery at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, member of the medical board for the International Hip Dysplasia Institute and former Chairperson of the Australian Paediatric Society, Bruce is all too familiar of the impact of hip dysplasia on the lives of infants and their parents.

**MEDIA CONTACT**

For further information and interview opportunities with Sarah Twomey, Bruce Foster and parents of children affected by DDH, please contact Healthy Hips Australia:

[info@healthyhipsaustralia.org.au](mailto:info@healthyhipsaustralia.org.au)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Hip dysplasia awareness flyer:

[http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/pdf/HHA\\_hipdysplasia\\_awareness\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/pdf/HHA_hipdysplasia_awareness_flyer.pdf)

Safe swaddling guidelines:

<http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/safe-swaddling-guidelines/>

Healthy Hips Week 10-16 April:

<http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/healthy-hips-week/>

Hip dysplasia stories:

<http://www.healthyhipsaustralia.org.au/category/stories-of-others/>