



early Therapy In Perinatal Stroke

# Introduction:

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### Disclaimer

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## What is a perinatal stroke?

A perinatal stroke is a stroke occurring before, during or shortly after birth. Many people are unaware that this can happen to babies, though they know of adults who have had a stroke.

**Please remember - it's not your fault this happened, parents are not to blame.**



Often the exact reason why the stroke happened is not known.

Stroke in babies is quite different from stroke in adults, because the brain and nerves are still developing.

However, one similarity is that a stroke affecting one side of the brain can lead to movement difficulties with the opposite side of the body.

In adults with stroke, these difficulties are noticed straight away.

In babies, difficulties may not be seen in the early months, but become more obvious as movements of the leg, hand and arm increase.

Thankfully, some newborn babies who have had a perinatal stroke will recover fully by themselves. However, some babies will develop a hemiplegia (weakness and stiffness affecting one side of the body).



## What is eTIPS?

eTIPS stands for “early Therapy In Perinatal Stroke” and is a new therapy approach for babies who have had a perinatal stroke.

We know that your baby’s stroke was on the **right** side of the brain and this means that it may have consequences for movement, sensation and vision on the **LEFT** side of the body.



We want to give your baby the best possible start for development.

We hope that by paying attention to the **LEFT** side from an early age, we can help your baby develop to his or her full potential.

At this young age the brain and nerves are still developing rapidly and there is research evidence that this development can be influenced by external factors.





External factors include the environment around the baby and interactions with other people.

We have produced this manual to help you find ways to promote development of your baby's vision and sensation on the **LEFT** side and to encourage movement of his or her **LEFT** side.



You can use this approach from birth through to 6 - 8 months of age and beyond if necessary.



## eTIPS - part of everyday life

Time spent with a new baby is special and should be treasured. We hope that you will see the ideas within this manual as activities which can be enjoyed by both you and your baby.

Many of the ideas are for activities that form part of everyday life for anyone with a new baby.

We hope to show you ways in which you can use those moments too, to promote the development of your baby's **LEFT** side without having to make any major changes to your daily routines.





## The First Few Weeks



**As soon as your baby arrives in this world he or she will be interested in what is going on.**

**Your new baby will spend a lot of time sleeping, but will gradually spend more and more time awake.**



**Your baby learns about the world by seeing, listening, feeling, tasting and smelling things and through experiencing movement.**



**Your baby may not always show a reaction in the early days but will be learning all the time.**

**Simply holding your baby and talking, smiling and laughing are really beneficial.**

**If your baby makes noises then talk back, smile and encourage more noises.**

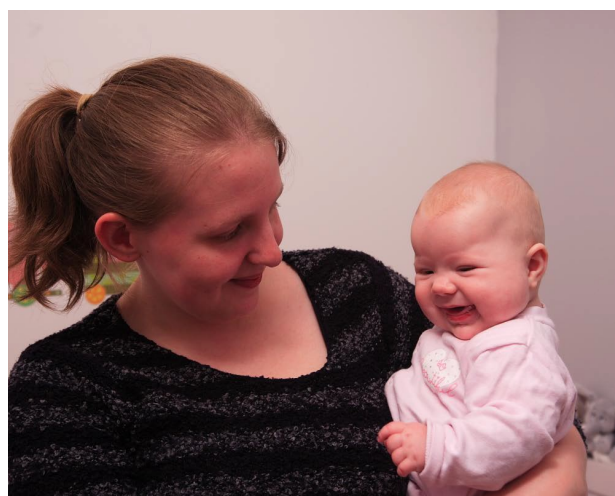
**This helps your baby to gain confidence in trying out noises ready for speech.**





You will know that your baby is enjoying activities when baby turns towards you or the toys you are presenting.

Later your baby may smile and laugh, but often babies need to experience the same toys, songs and games many times before they become really fond of them, so don't be afraid of repeating things.



### Babies love repetition!



Babies often cry a lot, especially with new experiences but don't be afraid to try things again another time.

During talking, singing and playing activities you should try to be at your baby's **LEFT** side. Hold any toys to baby's **LEFT** for him or her to see, feel and later reach for.





Your baby needs extra practice with sensation on his or her **LEFT** side.

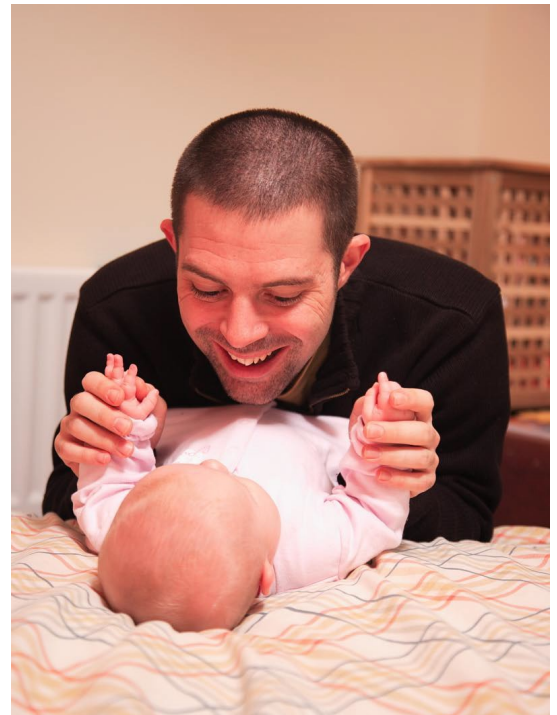


Massage is a great way to provide this and is an activity which you can do with your baby from very early on.

The 'Massage' section explains how to do this in a way which will especially benefit baby's **LEFT** side.

Try to minimise other distractions during play activities so baby can focus on you and any toys. So switch off the TV and turn the radio down.

Playing and interacting like this will also help you and your baby bond, making your time together really enjoyable.



Your newborn baby's eyesight is still developing and at first baby can just see the shapes of objects, light and can detect movement.

Your baby can only see things fairly close to, which is why faces and mirrors are so attractive and baby quickly learns to gaze into your eyes.

Try moving your head slowly to encourage baby to follow your eyes with his/her own eyes.



Your baby's eyesight will quickly develop and later you can hold a toy slightly to baby's **LEFT** side.

Move the toy slowly and see if baby's eyes will follow it.

Following toys in this direction may be a bit harder for your baby than following to the right.

Small colour differences can be tricky for baby to see in these early weeks.



Black and white toys and toys which have bright contrasting colours are more visually interesting for your baby than pastel or pale coloured toys.





Your newborn baby's hearing is also still developing and your baby may be slower to turn to sounds to his or her **LEFT** side.

Give your baby lots of opportunities to turn to the **LEFT** by shaking rattles and bells or other noisy toys at that side.

As your baby grows there will be more and more opportunities for play activities, and your baby will take an increasingly active part.

The 'Play Time' chapter has play ideas to help your baby's **LEFT** side.



Remember every child is unique and all children learn to do things at different times.



Children who have had a difficult start may take a little longer to reach some developmental milestones.

If you do have any concerns, no matter how small, please discuss them with your baby's therapist or other health professional.

More general information about caring for your baby can be found at [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/pregnancy-and-baby)



## eTIPS - Involving the whole family

Try to involve other people in caring for your baby using the general **LEFT** side principles in this manual. This could be:



brothers and sisters



grandparents



cousins



friends and relatives





## eTIPS - Involving other children

Babies love children and can be fascinated by them so try to encourage other children to sit on your baby's **LEFT** side when they are talking and playing with baby.



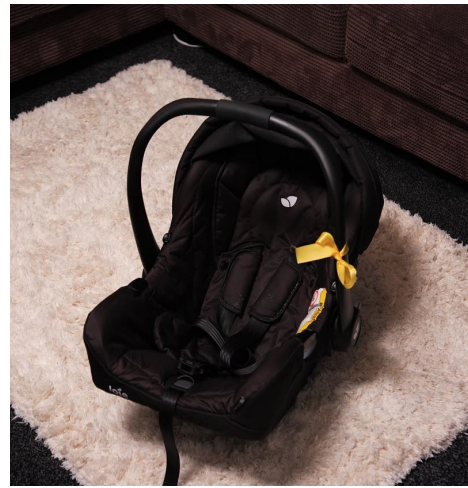


## eTIPS - Remembering which side is LEFT

Young children often do not understand **left** and **right** until they are at least of school age, especially **left** and **right** in relation to other people and objects.



Tying a ribbon on the **LEFT** side of the cot, chair, car seat or pram can help to remind everyone of which is baby's **LEFT** side:



Alternatively you can attach a small toy such as a wrist rattle to the **LEFT** side.





## eTIPS - Explaining eTIPS to young children



Explain to other children in simple terms why being on baby's **LEFT** side is important. For example:

Clip Art

“We are helping [*baby's name*] to learn to move and use this side of his/her body because this might be a little bit more difficult for [*baby's name*] than it is for you and me.”

“You can really help [*baby's name*] by sitting or standing on the side where the ribbon/toy is.”



## If Baby Becomes Upset

Please remember that most young babies cry a lot. This can be difficult to cope with especially if you are feeling tired and/or stressed.

Babies cry for different reasons which can be when they are:

- hungry or thirsty
- tired
- in need of a nappy change
- unwell
- disliking an activity
- too hot or too cold
- have wind

It is important to remember that baby's attention span will vary a lot, but generally it will be quite short.



If your baby looks unhappy or distressed during play then stop the activity or change to something else.

Signs that your baby is unhappy or tired include:

- crying or moaning
- turning his/her head away
- arching his/her back
- closing his/her eyes
- yawning





**If baby becomes upset you should change the activity or try cuddling and rocking.**

**You may need to feed your baby, give him or her a relaxing bath or massage or even go out for a walk with the pram.**



**If older babies become upset you can try singing quiet, soothing songs or looking at picture books together.**

**With time you will learn what works best for your baby but if your baby continues to be upset a lot of the time please talk to your baby's health visitor, therapist or other health professional.**