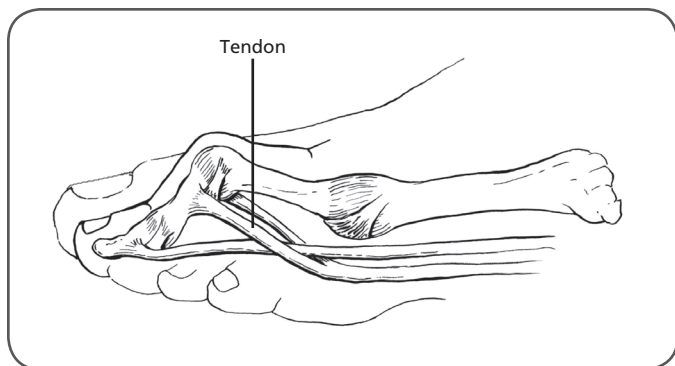


# Let's Talk About...

## Toe and Thigh Tendons Surgery

Your child may have joint or muscle problems from birth or from an injury. Some of these problems include a curly toe, per Dr. Stott where a toe is constantly bent, or a tight hamstring muscle. The hamstring muscle is the large muscle in back of the thigh. These muscle problems can make walking difficult and cause poor posture. This handout describes how to care for a child after a surgery to correct one of these problems. The surgeries are flexor tenotomy (FLEX-er ten-OTT-oh-me) and hamstring lengthening.



### What is flexor tenotomy?

This is a surgery where the surgeon cuts (releases) the tendons that are too tight. Often this surgery is done in outpatient surgery. This means the child is not admitted to the hospital after surgery.

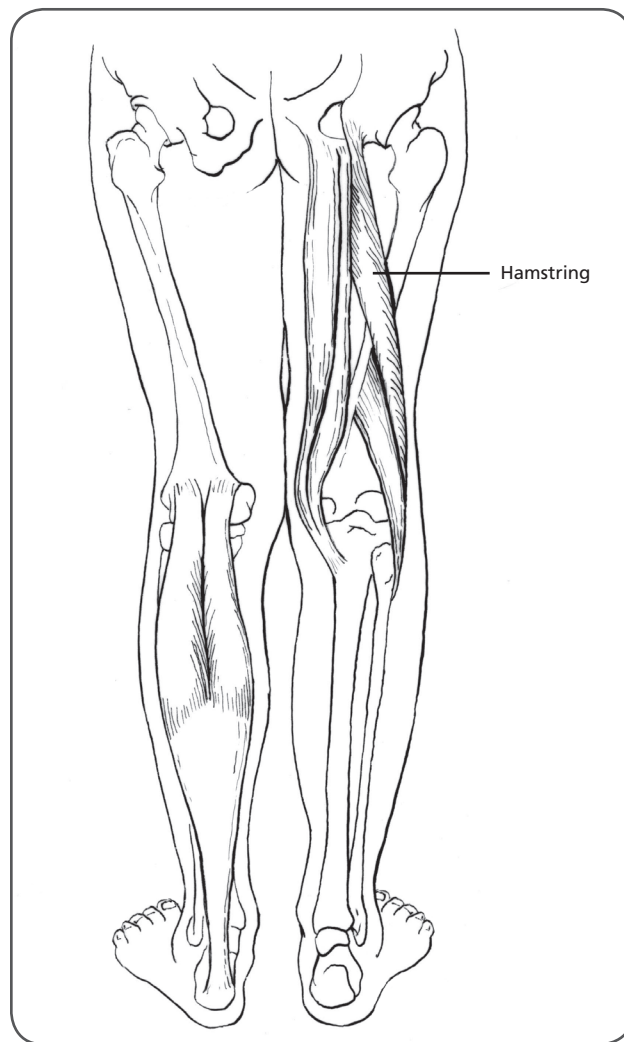
### What is hamstring lengthening?

This is a surgery on the hamstring muscle (the large muscle in back of the thigh). After this surgery, the muscle can stretch out.

### Diet

#### When can my child eat?

After your child wakes up from the procedure, he can drink clear liquids. Clear liquids include Pedialyte®,



water, apple juice, Gatorade®, Popsicle®, and plain Jell-O®. Most babies can take a bottle or breast-feed.

Your child may have a normal diet after he leaves the hospital. Start feeding him soft, easily digested foods. Try to stay away from high fat or greasy foods like hamburgers and pizza for 24 hours after surgery.

### What should I do about nausea and vomiting?

Sedation may cause your child to feel sick to his stomach (nausea), and he may vomit up to 24 hours after surgery. Sometimes car movement or pain

medicine may cause nausea. You can help control the nausea by encouraging your child to lie still and decrease movement. If your child has trouble with nausea and vomiting, feed him clear liquids. Slowly give him more normal foods till he is eating normally. If your child vomits, give his stomach 30 to 60 minutes to settle down and then begin feeding him clear liquids. It is important for your child to drink liquids after surgery to avoid dehydration (not enough fluid in the body). However, it is fine if he does not eat solid foods for a day or two. If he vomits all the time or continues for several hours, call your doctor for instructions.

### **How will I know if my child is drinking enough?**

After surgery, your child may have low body fluids. Some signs of not having enough fluids include dark yellow urine, a dry mouth (no spit), chapped lips, and the soft spot on a baby's head sinks inward. If you notice any of these things, give your child more to drink. He should urinate (pee) normally within 24 hours after surgery. A baby should have six to eight wet diapers in a 24-hour period, and an older child should urinate every six to eight hours.

## **Pain**

### **How can I tell if my child is in pain?**

No surgery is pain free, but it is important for your child to be comfortable so he can heal. If he is older, you can talk to him about his pain and figure out what he needs. If your child is younger or developmentally delayed, he may moan, whimper, make a face of pain, cry, be irritable, be inactive, not eat, or not sleep. In all cases, you should comfort your child and listen to his concerns.

### **How can I help with my child's pain?**

- Raise your child's leg that had surgery on pillows for at least the first 24 hours. This will limit the amount of swelling. Your child should wiggle his toes every once in a while. This will also help decrease swelling. Put an ice pack on your child's

surgery site for the first 24 to 48 hours. This may help decrease pain and swelling.

## **Medicine**

### **When should I give pain medicine to my child?**

Give your child pain medicine as your doctor ordered it. Avoid giving pain medicine on an empty stomach. Food or drink will decrease the chance of nausea. Your child will need less pain medicine after a few days. Your doctor may suggest giving acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen in the right dosage for pain. The doctor may also have you give an oral narcotic. Some oral narcotics have acetaminophen in them, so be sure not to give acetaminophen if your child takes these stronger medicines.

## **Wound care**

### **How should I care for the dressing?**

Your child will have a dressing on his foot or leg. Keep the dressing clean and dry. If his surgery was on his hamstring, he will also have a "knee immobilizer". This helps the hamstring to heal by keeping his leg straight. Your doctor will tell you how often to keep the immobilizer in place.

### **How much drainage is normal?**

A small amount of drainage is normal. It should be pink or clear, and thin. If you notice the drainage lasts more than a couple of days, is green, or if there is bright red blood or a lot of drainage, call your doctor's office.

### **When can the dressing come off?**

Your doctor will tell you when the dressing can come off.

## **Bathing/Showering**

### **When can my child take a bath or shower?**

Once the dressing has been removed, your child may shower, as instructed by your doctor. Your child should not tub bathe, go in a hot tub, or swim for

two weeks. Until your child can shower, clean him with a warm washcloth and soap. Allow the skin closures (like butterfly bandages) over your child's surgery site to fall off as the wound heals.

## Activity

### How active can my child be?

Limit your child's activity for the first 24 to 48 hours. He may put weight on the area as tolerated. A physical therapist may meet with you and your child to teach him how to use crutches. Your child should limit his sports or gym activities as instructed by his surgeon.

## Behavior

### What is normal behavior after surgery?

It is normal for your child to have behavior changes after surgery. Call your doctor if the behavior changes last longer than three to four weeks. Some examples of behavior changes include bedwetting, acting out, thumb sucking, changes in sleep and eating patterns, or nightmares. Make sure you comfort your child and help him feel safe. Understand that your child's routine has been upset by surgery. Being patient with your child will help reduce these changes.

## Calling the doctor

### When should I call the doctor?

You should call your doctor if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- Temperature over 101° F
- Drainage from the wound increases or lasts more than 3 or 4 days
- Increased swelling
- Bleeding
- Uncontrolled pain
- Numbness of fingers and toes

- Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, less than 6–8 wet diapers per day, lack of tears)
- Excessive diarrhea/constipation
- Chest pain or shortness of breath or any other emergency: Go to the Emergency Department or Call 911

### How do I call the doctor?

- Primary Children's Orthopedic Office: 801.662.5600.
- After hours, call the Primary Children's operator: 801.662.1000 ask for the on-call orthopedic resident.
- Primary Children's Same-day Surgery: 801.662.2855

### Follow-up appointment

Call the Primary Children's Orthopedic Clinic 801.662.5600 to make a follow-up appointment as soon as you get home from the hospital.