

Slipped capital femoral epiphysis (SCFE)

Disclaimer: This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

What is SCFE?

This condition affects the hips of adolescents. The hip is a ball and socket joint. In children the ball is connected to the femur (thigh bone) by a growth plate. As the growth of the femur slows down, the ball can slip. If this occurs it can cause the leg to turn outwards by changing the shape of the top of the femur. This can affect how the joint works. Some children may have a pain in the knee (called referred pain) from SCFE.

What is the cause?

The condition affects both boys and girls. There may be a link between increased weight, the shape and position of the femur (called retroversion) and the hormones of puberty.

What problems will occur?

If left untreated SCFE will get worse, and can lead to arthritis in the hip. Treatment helps to prevent arthritis in children.

What treatment will be needed?

Surgery will be needed. One or two screws are put into the ball of the femur to hold it in place. This can be done through a very small cut. Your child will be in hospital for one night only and the hip feels better straight away. Your child will need to move around on crutches for the next six weeks while the hip heals.

Some children with SCFE on one side can develop SCFE on the other hip. The other side will also be operated on at the first sign of any hip trouble. The screws aren't usually removed unless they are bothering the patient. They should definitely not be removed before the child stops growing.

Remember

- **Children with SCFE need surgery but usually lead full active lives after their hips have healed.**
- **SCFE can occur later on the other side. If the other hip is hurting see your doctor straight away.**



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