

Information leaflet for young people

## **Physiotherapy**

# **Whole-Body Vibration Training**

**Produced January 2012**

## What is Whole-Body Vibration?

A whole body vibration (WBV) platform is a small platform which vibrates at different settings. You can perform exercises on it in standing, sitting or kneeling positions, or by leaning onto it with your arms.

Our WBV Platform is attached to a tilt table. This allows children and young people who cannot stand independently to still use the WBV platform and to gradually be stood up with support during treatment.

If you are able to stand unaided, the platform will still be attached to the tilt table but it will be used in an upright position.

For those who are not able to stand even with the assistance of the tilt-table, it can still be used to exercise on in different positions e.g. sitting or kneeling



## **Why do we use Whole-Body Vibration – how can it help?**

WBV can be used as part of your physiotherapy treatment to help improve muscle strength and control. Whole body vibration has also been found to have a positive effect on your bone density, although the results for this can take a little longer to see.

WBV uses the body's neuromotor reflex system to train muscles – This means that your muscles are stimulated and made to work more than by standing or exercising alone for the same amount of time. Studies so far have shown that it can help children to become stronger, to be more mobile and has had some benefit on their bone structure and strength

## **What does the treatment involve?**

The WBV platform vibrates for very short periods of time –about 3 minutes. One treatment usually consists of exercising on the platform for 3 lots of 3 minutes.

During this time you will be asked to stand, sit, kneel or lean with your arms on the platform. Once you are able to maintain a position you may also be asked to carry out an exercise.

The exercises will be shown to you individually by your physiotherapist. You may not exercise in all of the positions: this will be decided by your physiotherapist.

Some examples of how whole-body vibration is used...



## **Is it safe?**

WBV training is relatively new in the UK, but it has been used for a number of years in other countries including Australia and Germany. Research studies have found that Whole-body vibration training is generally well tolerated and safe.

On rare occasions, it has been reported that it can cause symptoms such as tiredness, dizziness, make you feel sick or your skin to itch.

These symptoms are most likely to occur when you first start to train with the WBV platform. These happen because vibration training makes your muscles more active. This muscle activity will also increase the blood circulation to the area you are training which can cause a temporary drop in your blood pressure while your body adjusts, which is often what causes people to feel dizzy or nauseous (sick).

These symptoms do not happen often and when they do, they tend to disappear once you get used to the training.

If any of these symptoms do occur, then your physiotherapists will reduce your training intensity to allow your body to adjust to the activity. If they (the symptoms) continue then it may occasionally be necessary to stop using the WBV platform altogether.

Before you start using WBV your physiotherapist will ask you a number of questions about your general health to make sure that it is safe for you.

## **How often will I need to use it?**

Each child is different and programmes will vary from person to person. This will be discussed and decided upon between you, your physiotherapist, your doctor(s) and your family.

It is important that you continue to do your normal physiotherapy exercises or programme as well as coming to use the whole body vibration platform.

## **Is there anything else I need to know?**

If you and your physiotherapist decide to use WBV as a part of your treatment we may ask you to do some simple tests before and afterwards. This will look at your mobility or your ability to carry out certain activities and will help us to look at how much progress you are making. This may mean that we ask you and your family to attend an extra appointment before you start training and after you finish.

If you are using WBV as a part of your physiotherapy and wish to stop, please do tell your physiotherapist at any point. This will not affect the rest of your treatment.

## **Looking after and sharing information about you**

We have a duty to help children, young people and families understand how information about them is being kept and shared and we include the following information in all our patient information leaflets:

Information is collected about your health problem, treatment and care. We store it in written patient records and electronically on a computer. As part of your care and treatment we may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations who are either responsible or directly involved in your care. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the people looking after you or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 333 8403/8611.

**Who do I contact if I am worried or have any more questions?**

We hope that this information leaflet will help you to understand a little more about this treatment. We have tried to make it as clear as possible but some medical information can be difficult to understand. If you would like more information or have any questions, please talk to your physiotherapist.

**My physiotherapist is:**

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Telephone: 0121 333 9480

You can also find more information in the Child and Family Centre and on the internet. There is an internet computer in the Child and Family Information Centre. This is on the ground floor of the hospital near the main reception desk. You can search for information yourself or you can ask the Information Officer to help you.

This leaflet has been produced by the Physiotherapy Department