

allow for its removal during bathing. Removing the harness is determined individually on the basis of the provider's recommendation, the degree of hip instability, and the family's level of understanding. Parents are instructed to not adjust the harness. The child should be examined by the provider before any adjustment is attempted to make certain the hips are in correct placement.

Skin care is an important aspect of the care of an infant in a harness. The following instructions for preventing skin breakdown are stressed:

- Check frequently (at least two or three times a day) for red areas or skin irritation in skin folds or under the straps.
- Gently massage healthy skin under the straps once a day to stimulate circulation. In general, avoid lotions and powders because they can cake and irritate the skin.
- Always place the diaper under the straps.

Parents are encouraged to hold the infant with a harness and continue care and nurturing activities. The nurse can assist by being available for parents' questions about the necessary adaptations to daily care to decrease the parents' anxiety and possible feelings about the child being hurt by routine caring.

Casts and orthotic devices (braces) offer more challenging nursing and caregiver problems because they cannot be removed for routine care, although sometimes a brace may be removed for bathing. Care of an infant or small child with a cast requires nursing innovation to reduce irritation and to maintain cleanliness of both the child and the cast, particularly in the diaper area. (See earlier in this chapter for care of the child in a cast.)

It is important for nurses, parents, and other caregivers to understand that children in corrective devices need to be involved in all typical age appropriate activities. Confinement in a cast or appliance should not exclude children from family (or unit) activities. They can be held astride the lap for comfort and transported to areas of activity. An adapted wheelchair, stroller, or wagon can offer mobility to an older infant or child.

Clubfoot