



## Brachial Plexus Injuries

### What is a brachial plexus injury?

The brachial plexus is a group of nerves that connect to your spinal column at your neck. These nerves control the movement of your arms. An injury to the nerves of the brachial plexus affects muscles in the shoulder, arm, wrist and hand. Children with this injury may demonstrate poor muscle coordination, decreased strength, altered feeling and sensation or paralyzed movement in their affected arm. Brachial plexus injuries vary, depending on where or what nerve roots were injured.

Brachial plexus injuries may also be called Erb's Palsy, Klumpke's Palsy, Brachial Plexus Palsy, Erb-Duchenne's Palsy, Horner's Syndrome or shoulder dystocia.

### What causes brachial plexus injuries?

These injuries are the result of stretching, tearing or trauma to this group of nerves. Brachial plexus injuries often occur during the birthing process.

### Why is my child being referred for occupational therapy?

At Kenny Kids, our pediatric occupational therapists will teach you specific positioning and handling of your child to protect him or her from any further injury. The therapist also will teach you gentle stretching exercises to keep your child's arm from becoming stiff or difficult to move. As your child's therapy progresses, you will also learn playful activities to increase your child's strength and awareness of his or her arm.

### What can I do at home?

- It is important that your child begin therapy services as soon as possible to prevent his or her arm from becoming stiff or difficult to move.
- You can learn about your child's injury and let others know the best way to hold, move and encourage awareness of your child's injured arm(s).
- You can increase your child's awareness of his or her arm through gentle touch, lotion massage and water play during bath time.
- Avoid lifting your child from under the arms, which will prevent further injury.
- Do the gentle range of motion exercises recommended by your therapist two to three times per day.

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### **Kenny Kids™ Pediatric Rehabilitation Program Locations**

#### **Kenny Kids – Buffalo**

*Across the street from  
Buffalo Hospital*  
300 Catlin St., Suite 101  
Buffalo, MN 55313  
763-684-3888

#### **Kenny Kids – Coon Rapids**

3111 124th Ave. NW  
Coon Rapids, MN 55433  
763-236-7337

#### **Kenny Kids – Owatonna**

Owatonna Hospital  
2250 NW 26th St.  
Owatonna, MN 55060  
507-977-2150



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*Brachial plexus injuries (cont'd)*

## **Learn more about brachial plexus injuries**

### **NATIONAL BRACHIAL PLEXUS/ERB'S PALSY ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 23  
Larsen, WI 54947  
920-836-2151  
209-644-5813 fax  
[www.nbpepa.org](http://www.nbpepa.org)

### **UNITED BRACHIAL PLEXUS NETWORK**

1610 Kent Street  
Kent, OH 44240  
866-877-7004  
[www.ubpn.org](http://www.ubpn.org)

### **BRACHIAL PLEXUS PALSY FOUNDATION**

210 Spring Haven Circle  
Royersford, PA 19468  
610-792-4234  
[www.membrane.com/bpp](http://www.membrane.com/bpp)