

CANDIDATE SELECTION

Since its introduction, physicians have prescribed thousands of SWASH® for patients from infants to adults, ambulatory and non-ambulatory, from mild to severe involvement - to protect hip alignment, improve the ability to sit independently or at least with reduced external assistance, improve sitting and standing posture, and for improvement of stepping for patients with scissoring postures.

The following are guidelines presented by subject area.

Age

The following age discussions are intended as a guide only, based on fitting experiences. However, it is important to remember every candidate and level of development varies at different ages, so there will definitely be exceptions in each age category:

Early Intervention (9 months - 2 years):

Both SWASH® and SWASH® Low profile will fit an infant as young as 9-10 months. SWASH® has been widely prescribed for infants at risk for spastic hip displacement. When properly fitted, SWASH® will not interfere with crawling. For the child that may be able to learn to walk, SWASH® can often help them to better stabilize as they pull themselves up on furniture. For the child who may only be able to sit, the wide abduction base may help them achieve a more stable position.

2 - 6 years

This age group will generally adapt to the SWASH® very quickly. They tend to accept quite readily the correction it offers and, with guidance from the physical therapist and caregiver, develop new skills. They usually accept the sitting stability it offers and quite freely start using their upper extremities for function instead of for sitting balance.

6 - 12 years

Around this age the child can be slower to adapt. By the time a child reaches 9 or 10, there may also be muscle length issues (contracture), muscle strength issues, and long-standing neuromotor patterns that can be very difficult to overcome. For the child in this age group with strong adductor tone, the SWASH® Low Profile is generally recommended as the uprights in this model are stronger.

13 - Adult

The pelvic band of the Classic SWASH® will fit a waist circumference up to 72 cm (28 1/4 inches). SWASH® has been successfully fitted on small adults who fit within this range. Again, due to the increased strength of the uprights, the SWASH® Low Profile may be required to control the adductor tone. A larger size SWASH® Low Profile with longer uprights and larger cuffs is now available.

Acclimatization Time

Age, cooperation, and the degree of functional involvement all affect the length of time for the wearer to become accustomed to the orthosis. As a general rule, the younger the candidate, the quicker they accommodate to the orthosis. Even those that acclimate quickly, will continue to improve in function as they continue to wear the orthosis. If immediate results are not seen, it is encouraged to allow the candidate to continue to wear the orthosis at least an additional 30 minutes to one hour as it has been observed that given time to relax in the orthosis - they start to realize how they can use its support to sit, stand, or walk better. If no improvement is seen after one hour, it is unlikely SWASH® will be of benefit.

Sometimes improved posture is evident immediately upon application, but then he or she tends to return to the original slouched posture. This is usually indicative that the orthosis will work, but physical therapy and re-training may be required to establish new movement patterns.

Especially children who have always had to use their hands for balance, are scared to "let go" for fear they will topple over. A little "diversion therapy", such as trying to get them to clap their hands or reach for a ball will help them overcome the fear.