

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

Hypermobility

Please ensure that adult supervision is given when completing these activities.

Joint hypermobility is the ability to move joints (where 2 bones meet) beyond the expected range of movement. You may have this in one joint or many. If the muscles supporting the joint are also weaker you may experience some symptoms such as pain, fatigue, poor coordination, and reduced awareness for your body in space, impacting upon engagement in motor skills or self-care tasks such as dressing.

Hypermobility is life-long and factors such as a growth spurt, illness or inactivity can increase symptoms.

What Can Help?

- Continue to encourage slow and gentle movements and stretches of all joints each day, avoiding keeping your joints still for too long.
- Engage in low impact activities that continue to strengthen muscles such as swimming, walking, yoga or play dough/theraputty tasks. Avoid inactivity!
- Discourage activities that cause or increase stresses to joints and lead to pain. This can include resting your head on your hands when sitting at a table.
- Regular rest breaks during 'busy' tasks can be helpful to prevent fatigue. Try to work at a steady pace to avoid rushing and alternate light and heavy work.
- Ensure good body mechanics e.g. sit up right with feet flat on the floor. Consider using arms on a chair or arm supports if at a desk for a long period.
- Consider moving and handling techniques e.g. hold the 'load' close to your body when carrying something heavy or wearing a rucksack with padded straps to evenly distribute the weight.
- Provide extra time to complete tasks that require finer skill such as dressing e.g. be the first to go and get changed to maximise time allocated.
- To reduce stress placed on hand joints, consider tools that can make activities easier such as larger buttons, velcro, easy laces, sensor tooth paste and hand soap and larger/wider handle adapters for pens, paintbrushes or hair brushes and other tools.

Together with you, in your local community