Handling and Care Suggestions For Infants and Toddlers with OI

Children who have OI need **protective handling, good positioning** and **protected movement**. Caregivers should remember to encourage age appropriate cognitive development through language development and by encouraging small motor skills. Children with sever OI may appear to be much younger than their chronological age. In general, parents need to pad surfaces that the child may bump including bed rails, car seat, stroller and tub. These concepts are covered in detail in Chapter 7 of *Growing Up with OI: A Guide for Families and Caregivers*.

1. Never pull or push on a limb, or bend it into an awkward position.
2. Hydrocephalus occurs in a large percentage of children with Type III OI. Extra care is needed to support the head if it is oversize for the small body.
3. Lift a baby with OI onto your shoulder by placing one hand under the buttocks and legs, and the other hand under the shoulders, neck and head. Lean over the baby so that there is a shorter distance to lift.
4. Do not lift the baby from under the armpits.
5. **Diapering:** Do not lift by the ankles to change a diaper. Lift the baby by the buttocks. Spread your fingers apart as far as possible, and put your hand under the buttocks, with your forearm under the baby’s legs to prevent them from dangling.
6. Be aware of where the baby’s arms and legs are at all times to avoid awkward positions or getting a hand or foot caught.
7. For severely affected babies, it may be helpful to use a covered piece of foam rubber for transporting or holding the baby. As the baby gets older parents can gradually move away from using the pillow.
8. **Bedding:** For severely affected babies, a standard crib mattress is preferred to a very soft or overly padded mattress.
9. It is important for babies with OI to held and touched by parents and other caregivers, and that they be allowed to explore independent movement. Supporting infants in a variety of positions on the parent’s shoulder and eventually including side lying, develops muscles that will help with head and neck control and later on with sitting.
10. When a fracture is suspected, minimize handling of the affected limb.
11. Babies wearing a cast must have sponge baths.
12. **Bath:** An infant sized tub can be padded with towels or sponge. A molded
sponge bathing aid is also helpful.

13. **Clothing**: Simple, lightweight cotton clothing is recommended. Clothes with buttons or snaps or Velcro down the front and at the crotch are easier to put on than more complicated garments. Roll up sleeves or pants legs and gently pull the garment over the arm or leg. Do not pull the arm or leg through the sleeve or pant leg.

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