



The following excerpt has been taken from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center website.

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.mtKZKgMWKwG/b.4453217/k.731C/Brachial_Plexus_Injury.htm

Brachial Plexus Injury

Brachial plexus injuries are caused by excessive stretching, tearing, or other trauma to a network of nerves from the spine to the shoulder, arm, and hand. Symptoms may include a limp or paralyzed arm, loss of muscle control in the arm, hand, or wrist, and lack of feeling or sensation in the arm or hand. Injuries often occur secondary to vehicular accidents, sports injuries, gunshot wounds, or surgeries; many brachial plexus injuries happen during birth, if the baby's shoulders become impacted during the birth process causing the brachial plexus nerves to stretch or tear.

Some brachial plexus injuries may heal without treatment. Many children improve or recover by 3 to 4 months of age. Treatment for brachial plexus injuries includes occupational or physical therapy and, in some cases, surgery. The site and type of brachial plexus injury determine the prognosis. For avulsion (tears) and rupture injuries there is no potential for recovery unless surgical reconnection is made in a timely manner. For neuroma (scarring) and neuropraxia (stretching) injuries the potential for recovery is more encouraging. Most patients with neuropraxia injuries recover spontaneously with a 90-100 percent return of function.

The major area of concern to the people with brachial plexus injuries is often management of pain, which can be chronic and extreme, and which does not generally respond well to many painkillers.

According to the United Brachial Plexus Network, obstetrical injuries of this sort need not be reported to the Centers for Disease Control; therefore, many cases are incorrectly diagnosed or referred to as Erb's Palsy.

Sources: United Brachial Plexus Network, Brachial Plexus Palsy Foundation, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

Web Sites

United Brachial Plexus Network provides information, support and leadership for families and those concerned with brachial plexus injuries worldwide. Features an online registry, publications and informational materials to increase awareness of the disorder and to educate medical and legal professionals.

www.ubpn.org

NINDS Brachial Plexus Information Pages

www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/brachial_doc.htm

Merck Manual Home edition: Peripheral Nerve Disorders

<http://www.merck.com/mmhe/au/print/sec06/ch095/ch095a.html>

Merck Manual Home edition: Plexus Disorders

<http://www.merck.com/mmhe/au/print/sec06/ch095/ch095d.html>

Family Village: Brachial Plexus/Erb's Palsy

www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/lib_erbs.htm

Brachial Plexus Palsy Foundation

<http://membrane.com/bpp/>

Treatment of Brachial Plexus Injuries at **Mayo Clinic**

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/brachial-plexus/>

Texas Children's Hospital Brachial Plexus Clinic

<http://www.texaschildrens.org/carecenters/BrachialPlexus/Default.aspx>

SUNY at Syracuse: The Brachial Plexus

www.upstate.edu/cdb/grossanat/limbs2.shtml

Axillary Brachial Plexus Block

www.nda.ox.ac.uk/wfsa/html/u05/u05_006.htm

Peripheral Nerve Transplantation/Repair

A Tissue-Engineered Conduit for **Peripheral Nerve Repair**

<http://www.jhu.edu/JLAB/PDF/PUBS/1081.pdf>

Articles

“A Real-World Therapy: Is Peripheral Nerve Rerouting an Answer to Restoring Significant Function After SCI?” by S. Laurance Johnston, Ph.D. PN: Paraplegia News April 2002.

http://sci.rutgers.edu/index.php?page=viewarticle&afile=31_March_2002@rerouting.html

CareCure’s article on Rerouting Peripheral Nerves to Restore Function

The following books and videos are available for free loan from the PRC library. For more information, please see www.paralysis.org and click the Lending Library tab.

Books

- Kawai, H. and H. Kawabata. **Brachial Plexus Palsy**. River Edge, NJ: World Scientific, 2000.
- Nath, Rahul K. **Obstetric Brachial Plexus Injuries: Erb’s Palsy**. College Station, Texas: Virtualbookworm.com Publishing, 2007.
- Parker, James N. and Philip M. Parker. **The Official Patient’s Sourcebook on Brachial Plexus Injuries**. San Diego, CA: ICON Health Publications, 2002.

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