Transient synovitis (irritable hip) is the most common cause of a painful limp in active children over 4 years of age. It occurs when the lining of the hip joint becomes inflamed with extra fluid. The pressure inside the hip joint from the fluid can be painful and cause a child to limp. A recent viral illness or injury to the area are usually associated with this condition. It is not a serious condition and will get better on its own within two weeks.

**Symptoms**
- Limp or refusal to walk
- Pain in any of these areas: hip, groin, thigh or knee
- Usually only one side is affected
- Some other conditions that require treatment can mimic transient synovitis.

**Home Care**
Rest at home helps your child recover from an irritable hip on its own. Your child will naturally sit or lie in a position that is more comfortable for them. You should see an improvement after a few days but it can take up to two weeks. Once you start to see an improvement you can allow your child to do their usual activities but avoid active play or sports until they are completely better.

**Medicines**
Anti-inflammatory medicines such as ibuprofen can help reduce the pain and swelling in the hip. Refer to the medicine packet/bottle for directions of use. Never give aspirin to children under the age of 12. Antibiotics are not needed as the condition is not caused by a bacterial infection.

**Summary**
- Irritable hip is the most common cause of a limp in children over 4 years of age
- Symptoms usually self-resolve within two weeks without long term effects on the hip
- Rest and anti-inflammatory medicine such ibuprofen can help relieve symptoms
- Antibiotics are not needed as this condition is not caused by a bacterial infection.

For more information
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