



The Moro Reflex

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What is the Moro Reflex?

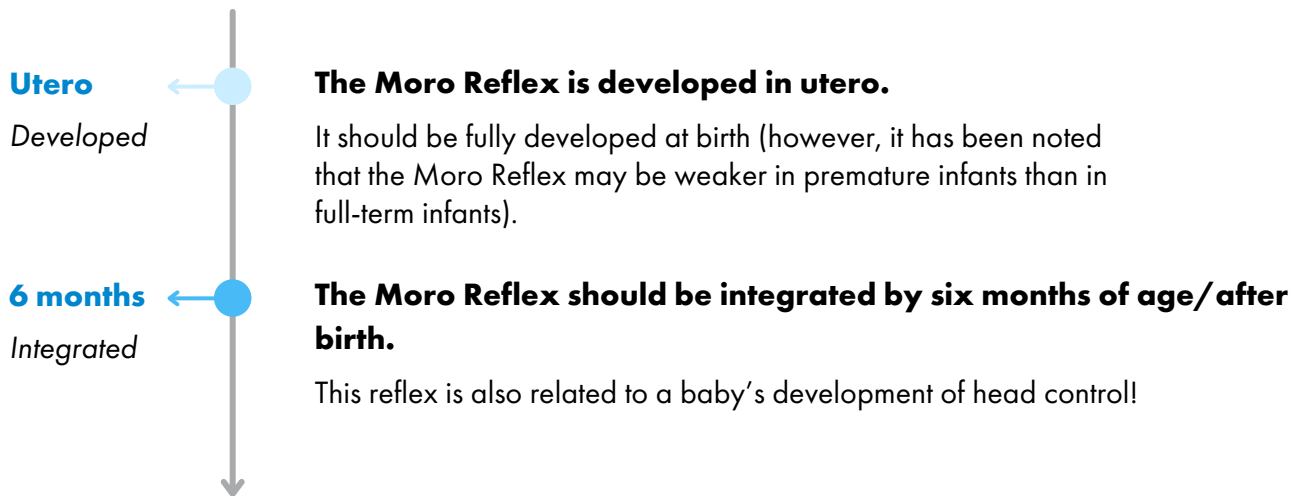
- The Moro Reflex is present at birth - it is an involuntary movement in response to sudden stimuli.
- You've heard of the startle reflex, right? That's the Moro Reflex!
- It assists with the breathing mechanism and provides energy and adrenaline to begin the birthing process, while assisting the baby to descend the birth canal, as well as helping the infant take their first breath.
- An article published in 2020 described the Moro Reflex as "an involuntary protective motor response against abrupt disruption of body balance or extremely sudden stimulation."
- The Moro Reflex is designed to protect the infant, as the automatic response to sudden stimuli guards the infant with a physical reaction until higher brain centers develop.
- The Moro Reflex induces a physical response as well as an auditory response - the infant will typically cry during this startle response. This is meant to alert the adult that the infant is in "danger" or needs assistance.
- This startle response typically only lasts for a few seconds. You'll see movement in the arms and the legs, as well as a startled look on baby's face.
- Because this is a "protective" response, stress chemicals are released. Think of the adrenaline rush associated with "fight or flight" - it's the same concept.
- The Moro Reflex is directly connected to the Fear Paralysis Reflex (FPR), as the Moro emerges as the FPR integrates.
- An overactive Moro Reflex can look like significant startles, difficulty staying asleep, frequent crying, clingy, fussy, colicky, and may require or dislike being held all the time.

Source:

ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK542173



Moro Reflex Integration:



As the Moro Reflex begins to integrate, the adult startle reflex starts to take over, i.e. the Strauss Reflex, which looks like shoulder elevation, blink, relaxation, locate the stressor, and then resume.

Special Notes on Integration:

Special Note #1

If a child has successfully integrated their primitive reflexes, a sudden or chronic bout of trauma, stress or injury can re-activate these reflexes.

Special Note #2

While there is no guarantee for reflex integration, there are contributing factors to consider if the child has an unintegrated Moro Reflex.

Special Note #3

You may have heard talk about swaddling and the Moro Reflex. However, there has been no research to prove a correlation between swaddling and an unintegrated Moro Reflex.

Source:

journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0214548

What an unintegrated Moro Reflex looks like:

Because the Moro Reflex elicits a physical reaction, it also includes a chemical reaction.

- Stress hormones are released when the Moro Reflex is activated, specifically adrenaline and cortisol.

When the Moro Reflex is unintegrated, these chemicals are being released more often.

- Resulting in hypersensitivity, adverse reactions to small problems, focus, and concentration, and overall anxiety.

Additional symptoms of a potentially retained Moro Reflex:

- Mood swings/sudden changes in behavior
- Impulsivity
- Visual challenges
- Learning difficulties
- Depression
- Poor tolerance to change
- Dyslexia and/or Dyscalculia
- Asperger syndrome
- ADHD
- Autism
- Emotional and social immaturity
- Coordination and balance challenges
- Motion sickness
- Allergies and decreased immune function
- Down Syndrome
- Cerebral Palsy

Conditions associated with the Moro Reflex:

- ADHD
- Autism
- Cerebral Palsy
- CAPD (Central Auditory Processing Disorder)
- Dyslexia
- Dyspraxia
- Visual Processing Disorders