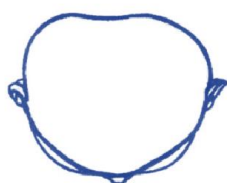




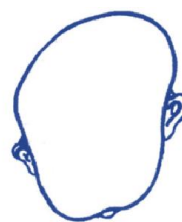
Positional Plagiocephaly and Congenital Muscular Torticollis

What is a Positional Plagiocephaly?

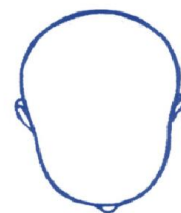
Positional Plagiocephaly is a change of shape of the head. There is a flat spot on one side or across the back of the baby's head. This can happen in a few weeks to a few months. When the flattening is to one side, the baby may have changes to the position of one ear and to the shape of his face.



Flattening across
the back of the head



Flattening to one side
of the back of the head



Normal
head shape

What causes Positional Plagiocephaly?

The most common cause is baby spending large amounts of time on their backs. It is important that a baby sleeps on their back to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). When baby is awake it is important to vary the positions that your baby is in. When babies spend much of their awake time lying on their backs, or sitting in a car seat or a baby swing, the back of the head can become flattened.

Some babies have difficulty moving their necks (called torticollis) and if babies are unable to move their heads from side to side, their heads can become flattened.



What is Congenital Muscular Torticollis and what causes it?

Congenital Muscular Torticollis is a condition in which the neck muscle is shorter on one side of the neck than the other. This shorter muscle causes your baby's head to be pulled to one side and your baby may have difficulty moving their heads from side to side. Babies with Torticollis have difficulty keeping their eyes level with their shoulders.

There are two theories of how torticollis can happen. One possible cause is that the neck muscle was stretched during birth and then it healed with some scar tissue causing the neck to be tight and short. Another possible cause is that the neck muscle is short because of the position the baby was in inside the womb.

What can you do to prevent your baby from getting a flat head and to help stretch out their neck muscle?

When your baby is sleeping:

- Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep, both at naptime and at bedtime. This has been proven to be the safest position for sleep.
- Change the position of mobiles in your baby's crib, encouraging them to look in different directions.
- Place your baby's head at the foot of the crib one day, and at the head of the crib the next day. Babies prefer to look out into the room and will position their head accordingly.

When your baby is awake:

- Provide lots of supervised tummy time when your baby is awake. Try placing a small rolled towel under his chest or lay him on your chest.



- Change how you hold your baby when feeding and carrying your baby.
- Limit the time spent in car seats to travel time only. Infant swings and bouncy chairs will also keep your baby's head in the same position and should be limited.

- Play with your baby lying down, face-to-face, or by placing your baby on your legs and gently lifting him up and down.
- Help your baby to turn their head by getting them to follow your voice and look at you.



What can you do if your baby has a flat area on their head?

- Keep your baby off of the flat side as much as possible.
- See your health care provider to discuss any concerns with a flat area on their head, or difficulty moving their necks.
- Make a self-referral directly to One Kids Place by calling 705-476-5437 or visiting Onekidsplace.ca

Does having a flat head cause problems?

In most cases, having a flat spot on the head will not hurt your baby, or affect brain development. In some cases, families with babies who have a severe flat spot on their head may consider the use of a special helmet. Helmet therapy is most effective when started before the age of 6 months. Helmet therapy may be covered by some private benefit plans.

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