

FACT SHEET

Plagiocephaly

Plagiocephaly refers to any condition characterized by a persistent flattened spot on the back or side of the head, and is sometimes called Flat Head Syndrome. A tight and/or weak neck can contribute to this developing.

This condition can be positionally induced. Because babies are encouraged to sleep on their backs this compresses the back of their head. This together with babies not receiving tummy time during awake periods and also due to babies spending too much time in car seats, swings, infant carriers, etc can result in a flat spot developing.

Prevention

Tummy time! We can't stress enough how important supervised tummy time is during your baby's awake periods. Try tummy time with your newborn for small periods and try to build up the time that your baby can tolerate being in this position.

Secondly, limit the amount of time that your baby spends sitting or lying in any piece of equipment (car seat, bouncer seat, swing, etc). Alternate the end of the crib in which your baby sleeps. Alternate the end where you place your baby's head on the changing table. Place toys on different sides of the stroller, bouncer seat and swing to encourage your baby to turn his head to both sides.

The following link shows many pictures and contains excellent explanations for how to facilitate tummy time play with your infant, as well as carrying positions which encourage neck and trunk muscles to become strengthened:

<http://day2dayparenting.com/torticollis-plagiocephaly-prevention-getting-help/>

Physio help

Your therapist will work with your family to show you simple positioning and exercises for your baby that include both passive and active range of motion and strength components. They will demonstrate proper positioning both while in equipment (car seats, high chairs) and when being held so you can encourage proper alignment, strength and stretching of your child's neck. They will show you ways to incorporate age appropriate tummy time, and may also teach you massage techniques. Studies that have looked at neck range of motion report that the outcomes show good to excellent results for children who began treatment early. Your physio can also monitor that your babies head shape is progressing as expected or refer on as required.

