

Positional Plagiocephaly Reposition and Treatment Program

Several boxes below have been checked to assist you in addressing concerns for a flat spot on your baby's head. Please perform these actions as described in order to assist your baby in rounding out their head. If you have any questions, please contact The Erlanger Cleft and Craniofacial Program at 423-778-9192.

- Change the head position while your baby sleeps. Reposition your baby's head when they are sleeping on their back. Even though they will move around throughout the night, it is still a good idea to place the flat side of the child's head up and the rounded side of the head touching the mattress. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend using a wedge or other device to keep your baby in one position.
- Alternate positioning in the crib. Consider how you lay your baby down within their crib. Most parents are right-handed. Right-handed parents tend to lay their baby down with their heads to the left. In this position, the baby must turn to the right in order to look out into the room. Whichever side of your baby's head is flattened, you will want to position your baby in the crib to encourage active turning of the head to the other side.
- Alternate the position of the crib within the room. Most babies do not like to look at a blank space or wall or a surface without stimulus. Take all toys, activities and distractions out of the side of the crib that is against the wall. Turn the crib so that laying in the flat spot would face the child toward the wall. Place all toys and stimuli on the side of the crib that is facing the room.
- Switch the arm used to hold the baby. Most parents are right-handed. This means that most parents tend to hold the baby in their left arm and use the right to feed or do other activities. Try to hold the baby in the right arm and use the left for activities as much as possible.
- Hold your baby more. Reduce the amount of time your baby spends lying in a position where the head is resting on a flat surface (car seats, strollers, swings, bouncy seats, play pens). For example, take them out of a swing if they fall asleep or remove them from a car seat when you get home rather than leaving them in the seat to sleep. Holding your baby often will reduce the pressure on the head overall. Variety is important.
- Move the car seat in your car. If your baby likes to look out the window and turns their head to rest on the flat side, consider moving the car seat to their other side of the car (if it is not in the center already)
- Practice tummy time. Provide plenty of supervised time for your baby to lie on their stomach while awake during the day. Supervised tummy time is safe to start as soon as your baby is able to easily raise their head off the ground, generally around a month of age. Tummy time promotes the normal growth of the back of the head, strengthens their neck and arm muscles and encourages your baby's development.
- Home neck exercises. Many babies with a flat spot on the head have at least a degree of torticollis. Uncorrected torticollis can not only affect the progress on the flat spot but also affect facial growth. At least twice per day help your baby stretch their neck. Over time, the chin should be able to turn to the shoulder on each side. Additionally, work on ear to shoulder stretches on both sides.
- Football hold. This exercise will be demonstrated to you in clinic. The football hold places tension across tightened neck muscles to assist with stretching in cases with torticollis.
- Physical Therapy
- Helmet Therapy



Exercise 1. Child undergoing exercise with face looking toward shoulder.



Exercise 2. Child undergoing exercise with ear tilting toward shoulder.

This information is designed to provide information about exercises that have been prescribed by your child's health-care provider. If you have questions about these instructions or your child's care, contact your physician.

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