

POSITIONAL PLAGIOCEPHALY: FLATHEAD

FACTS

- Plagiocephaly is the distortion of the shape of the skull.
- Positional plagiocephaly is the distortion of the shape of the back of an infant's skull due to remaining in a supine position for an extended period of time.
- The incidence of positional plagiocephaly has increased due to the "Back to Sleep Campaign" decreasing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- Congenital Torticollis (a tight neck) may also cause a flathead.
- In general, positional plagiocephaly does NOT cause long-term damage or complications.
- A pediatrician must be consulted to rule out other causes of plagiocephaly.
- Recent research suggests that helmets are not helpful for most cases of positional plagiocephaly. Please discuss this with your pediatrician.

PREVENTION

SLEEP

- ALWAYS place your infant on their back to sleep! NEVER place your infant on their stomach to sleep.
- Modify your infant's sleep position by placing your infant at opposite ends of the crib on alternate nights.
- Rearrange the furniture to ensure your infant is attracted to a light source such as a window.
- If a thumb-sucker, encourage your infant to suck the thumb on the opposite side of the head flatness by covering the hand on the flat side.
- Gently adjust your infant's head to the non-flat side after they have fallen asleep.

PLAY TIME

- Participate in SUPERVISED tummy time as much as possible by interacting with your infant at eye-level, using stimulating toys, reading, or playing interactive games such as peek-a-boo.
- Your infant may resist at first, but most will learn to love it.

FEEDING

- Alternate feeding position for both breast and bottle fed babies.

DIAPER CHANGES

- Alternate changing position to encourage your infant to turn toward the non-flat side.

TRAVEL

- Limit time your infant spends in the car seat.
- Do NOT add extra equipment to your car seat without discussing with your pediatrician, as this may interfere with the correct functioning of the car seat.
- Consider using a baby carrier/sling/wrap during the day.