

Plagiocephaly

PREVENTION BEGINS
AT BIRTH

Doctors have found that placing babies on their backs to sleep helps prevent SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). However, babies who lie in one position too long may develop an abnormal head shape called plagiocephaly (pley-jee-uh-sef-uh-lee) or positional molding.

What is Plagiocephaly?

- Plagiocephaly means slanted or flattening of the head.
- An infant's skull is very soft to allow the brain to grow during the first year of life. If the head stays in the same position, a flat spot may develop because of the baby's soft skull.
- Plagiocephaly is when the side or back of the head becomes flattened, often due to lying in one position too long.



Limit use of car seats and baby carriers when baby is awake.

What causes positional molding?

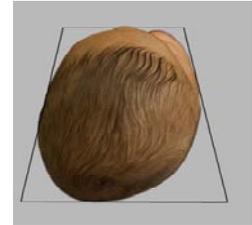
- It occurs in babies who sleep on their backs or spend a big part of the day in an infant carrier and/or stroller.
- The combination of sleeping on the back and pressure on the back of the baby's head can create a flat spot.

What results from abnormal head shaping?

- Once the head changes begin, if the baby is not put in different positions, the flat spot may get worse.
- If your baby's head still has a flat spot at 3 months, a molding helmet may be needed to improve the flat spot.
- The entire head can change shape, even the face!
- Without treatment, changes in face shape can lead to an eye imbalance and a change in jaw shape.

Plagiocephaly Can Be Prevented

- Change your baby's position often when awake.
- Limit the amount of time your baby rests in baby furniture – car seats, infant carriers, and strollers.
- It is very important to put your baby on his tummy when he is awake and being watched. This takes the pressure off the back of your baby's head and reduces the chance to develop a flat spot.
- Being on his tummy while you are with him will strengthen the neck, arms, and tummy and back muscles. With stronger muscles, your baby will be able to look both ways, which will help reduce the pressure to the same side of the head.
- When your baby is awake, focus on supervised Tummy Time with your baby.
- **The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies lie on their back to sleep and have supervised tummy time.**



A typical baby's head is more oval shaped – not like the head shape pictured here.



Tummy Time