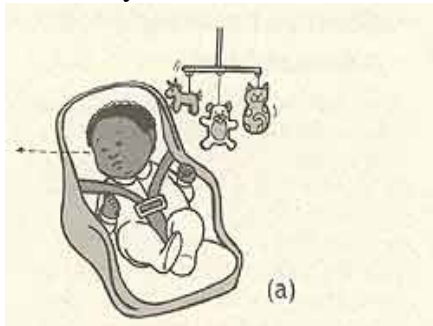


Positioning for Play

Tummy Lying - While your baby is awake, tummy lying should be started from early infancy to help your baby develop their neck muscles. Even a few moments at a time helps babies become comfortable with this position. As they become stronger, they will begin to lift and turn their head.



Place toys to encourage your baby to turn their head when they are on their tummy and when they are on their back.



Back Lying - Encourage your baby to hold his head in the middle by the use of overhead toys and mobiles.

Sitting - In an infant seat or car seat, support their head with a rolled towel to encourage the head to lie straight.

If you think your baby may be developing plagiocephaly or a torticollis, contact your family physician.



Five Counties Children's Centre
Physiotherapy Department
705-748-2221

Positioning Your Baby For Sleep And Play



Parent Information for Healthy Newborns

Torticollis

The Canadian Pediatric Society has recommended that normal healthy babies sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Infants younger than 2-3 months do not have adequate muscle strength in their necks to control or change head position, which is why back lying is safest.

However, there are some side effects to infants sleeping on their backs, particularly if the infant is ALWAYS on their back with their head turned to one side. One of the side effects may be Torticollis (wry neck) and the other is Plagiocephaly (flattened head). Both of these conditions can easily be prevented with careful positioning of the child during both sleep and play.

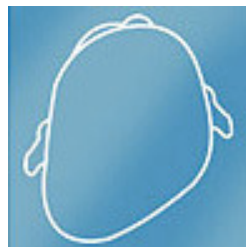
Torticollis or “wry neck” describes a condition in which the infant’s head is consistently turned to one side due to neck muscle tightness. This can happen when babies sleep on their backs. If the baby sleeps with his head turned to one side, the muscles on one side of the head can become tight and shortened.

Typical posture for a left torticollis



Plagiocephaly/Skull Asymmetry

The skull of an infant continues to grow and develop during the first years of life. Constant pressure over one area of the skull can prevent even growth and shaping of the infant’s head. This is common when babies sleep on their backs with their heads turned to one side. As the skull flattens on that side, the baby may find it even more difficult to lie with the head turned the other way. Torticollis and plagiocephaly often happen together, one leading to the other.



Positioning for Sleep

Newborns should be placed on their backs for sleep. Parents should ensure that an equal amount of time is spent with the head turned to either side.

Place crib toys on both sides so your baby will be encouraged to turn his head in both directions.

Alternate your baby’s position in the crib so he will turn his head in either direction when you come into the room.