



Plagiocephaly (Flat Head Syndrome)

Plagiocephaly is the term used when your baby's head is uneven or has a flat spot on either side, or the back of their head. The uneven head shape can occur in the uterus, during birth or when your baby is at home. The flat spot can be mild or severe.

Babies skulls are soft and flexible, and the shape can change very easily. A flat spot can occur anywhere on your baby's head if your baby is lying in the same position for long periods of time. A flat spot can form on the head if your baby has tight neck muscles, a term called Torticollis.

Signs of Plagiocephaly

- Your baby might have a flat spot on the left or right side of its head or on the back of its head.
- Your baby's ears may look uneven.
- Your baby's forehead may look prominent
- You might notice your baby favouring one side with their head

Prevention

- Giving your baby regular tummy time, starting with 1 minute and building up to 10-15 minutes by 4 months
- Vary the position of your baby's head when they are awake and asleep
- Change your baby up the opposite end of their bassinet or cot and change table
- Swap the arms, you are holding your baby in
- Encouraging reaching, rolling, and turning of the head
- Encourage your baby to turn their head to the non-favoured side using a rattle, singing, toys



Treatment

- Most babies do not need any treatment for plagiocephaly if above strategies are adopted
- If you feel your baby's flat spot is not improving or your baby is unable to turn their head to one side, you will need to see your Doctor and a Paediatric Physiotherapist
- For severe plagiocephaly, your Doctor may recommend that your baby wears a fitted helmet, which takes the pressure off the flat spot
- Helmet treatment starts between six and eight months of age and is completed before 12 months, as this is the time of rapid growth of the skull.

