

Tummy Time

What is it?

When your baby is awake and on their tummy.

Why does baby need this?

- helps prevent baby flathead (or positional plagiocephaly)
- helps strengthen baby's muscles
- helps baby to learn new skills
- gives baby more things to look at



Where can my baby have tummy time?

- on your chest
- on your lap
- on the floor
- on a firm safe surface

When could my baby have tummy time?

For short periods when they are awake, anytime during the day, longer periods as they get older.

My baby hates tummy time!

What should I do?

- Start by lying your baby on their tummy on your chest.
- Place your baby on their tummy after each diaper change, and add a little extra tummy time each day.
- Give your baby lots of interesting things to look at - coloured toys, a mirror, or your face.
- When your baby can lift their head off the floor, give them support by placing a rolled towel under their chest - arms in front of the towel.
- Make tummy time your face to face fun time.

For more information please refer to *Baby's Best Chance* (Revised 7th edition. Pg.75) available at Health Units or online at www.healthlinkbc.ca/babys-best-chance



What if my baby already has a flat spot?

- Throughout the day position your baby so there is no pressure on the flat spot of their head (this is called counter positioning) - counter positioning takes the pressure off the flat spot so that as your baby's skull grows, the head can become more round.
- Place your baby in a position where there is pressure on the round side of their head (such as side lying on the round side).

The sooner you perform positioning activities to reshape your baby's head the quicker you'll get results.

Contact us.

Phone/Text 250.833.0164

Email info@shuswapchildrens.ca
shuswapchildrens.ca

For up-to-date information. Follow us on Facebook & Instagram

Visit our office.

551 Trans-Canada Hwy, Salmon Arm, BC

Located on the unceded traditional territory of the Secwépemc People of the Shuswap Nation and the home of the Salmon Arm Métis Association.

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Heads Up

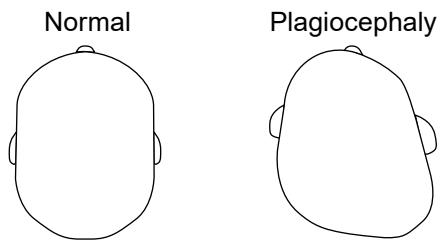
Important play & positioning ideas for every baby



What is plagiocephaly?

Plagiocephaly is the medical term for a baby's head shape that is flat in one spot.

Positional plagiocephaly is the term used when the flat spot is developed from the child lying on one part of their head - often one ear is more forward than the other and there can be facial changes. It is a common condition and is easy to prevent and to treat.



Why does it happen?

- **Babies' skull bones are soft until at least a year** and can change shape easily as a result of pressure on the skull.
- **Babies who tend to spend a lot of time on their backs** (i.e. in car seats, strollers, or swings) are more susceptible to developing a flat spot on their heads.
- **Babies often have a preference to look to one side** - this may be a preference that they developed before they were born or it may be from a tight neck muscle.
- **If babies always look in one direction** they spend more time on one side of their head and they are more susceptible to having a flat spot.

How to prevent plagiocephaly.

- Change your baby's position often.
- Continue to have babies sleep on their backs.
- When awake your baby should be on their back for short periods of time only (includes time in props).
- When *awake*, your baby should spend most of the time on their tummy or side when lying on the floor.
- Encourage babies to look in both directions - use toys or people's faces to encourage baby's chin to come in line with their shoulder.
- Change position of toys and mobiles regularly so your baby is not always looking in one direction.



- Call the Shuswap Children's Association physiotherapist if you notice that your baby always looks to one side or tilts their head to one side - your baby may need special exercises because of a tight neck muscle.
- When picking up your baby, roll your baby onto their side, sit them up, then pick them up - this helps strengthen baby's neck/trunk muscles and prevents pressure on the back of their head.



Props

Props are baby equipment items that restrict babies' natural ability to move and explore, such as strollers, car seats, swings, jolly jumpers and exersaucers.

Limit the time babies are in props.

Why limit time in props?

- Babies who spend a lot of time in props (i.e. car seats and swings) are more prone to develop plagiocephaly (baby flat head).
- Babies need to spend time being carried, time on their tummy or side lying on the floor when they're awake.
- Babies are not ready to support their weight in standing until they are able to pull themselves to standing (this happens at about age 9 months).
- Babies who spend lots of time in props can develop ways of moving that may slow down their development.

If you have any questions about your baby's head shape or development, please call the **Shuswap Children's Association:**

Physiotherapy Program
778.824.0446

Infant Development Program
250.833.0439