



# Plagiocephaly (Flat Head Syndrome)

*Prepared by the Child Care Wellness Team at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota*

## What Is It?

- Babies can develop a flat spot on the back of their head
- May also be called Positional Plagiocephaly

## How Does It Happen?

- The most common cause of a flat head is sleeping in the same position too long
- It can start before birth if there is pressure on baby's skull
- It can also be caused by tight neck muscles, a condition called torticollis

## What Are the Signs to Look For?

- Flattening of one side of baby's head
- Less hair on that part of the head
- The ear of the flattened side may look pushed forward

## Can It Affect the Brain?

- Flat Head Syndrome does not affect the development of the brain

## How Can Flat Head Syndrome Be Prevented and Treated?

- Must be diagnosed by a physician
- While baby is awake, limit time in swings, bouncy chairs or strollers to less than 15 minutes twice a day to decrease the time spent resting the head on a flat surface
- Always remove a child from a car seat unless transporting
- ONLY allow a baby to sleep while lying on his/her back in a safe crib or a pack n' play to reduce the risk of SIDS
- Provide supervised tummy time by lying baby on his/her stomach while awake to strengthen neck muscles
- Hold baby more often
- Alternate the position of the head while at play or sleep on back from right to left and left to right
- NEVER use wedge pillows or other items to keep a baby in one position
- Physical therapy and/or home exercises may be prescribed
- Use of a helmet may be prescribed to facilitate normal growth

Sources:  
*Kidshealth.org*  
*Mayo Clinic*

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