

## **Infant Head Shape**

### **T.I.P.S. to Prevent or Reshape Flat Heads**

If a baby's head is in the same position all the time, it may get flat in one area from the pressure. This is called flat head or positional plagiocephaly.

### **Use T.I.P.S. to keep your baby from getting flat head**

#### **T= Tummy Time**

- Try to do 10 to 15 minutes, at least three times each day.
- Start with short amounts of time several times a day. This will make a difference.
- Increase the amount of time your baby spends on their tummy while awake. The goal is to work up to at least 60 minutes, or more, by the time your child is 4 months old.
- Make sure your baby is awake and supervised.
- Start on your baby's first day of life or when your doctor says it is okay.
- How to position your baby:
  - Put your baby tummy-side down on your chest.
  - Put your baby over your lap to burp or to rest.
  - Lie on the floor on your stomach and face your baby.
  - Try a towel or blanket roll under your baby's chest and arms to give support.
  - Use mirror, lighted or musical toys and put them within your baby's reach.
  - Carry your baby around tummy side down (airplane).
  - Put two babies on their stomachs facing each other.



#### **I= Infant Equipment**

- Limit the amount of time your baby spends in swings, strollers, bouncy seats and car seats. These all put pressure on the back or side of the head and can flatten the skull.
- Give your baby more time to play on the floor on their back and stomach.
- Use an upright baby carrier (Snuggli<sup>®</sup>, Baby Bjorn<sup>®</sup>, ERGObaby<sup>®</sup>, Moby Wrap<sup>®</sup> etc).
  - It takes the pressure off the back of the head.
  - Lets your baby look around.
  - Your baby will feel close and comfortable next to parent or caregiver.



## **P= Positioning**

**Babies must always sleep on their backs, alone and in a crib.**

- Turn your baby's head to the opposite side each time they sleep.
- Switch off which end of the crib your baby's head is placed.
- Give your baby time on each side while awake.
- Switch the arm your baby is held in when you feed them.
- Toys. **Be sure that toys are securely attached to the crib.** There should never be loose toys in the crib.
  - Put toys on **each** side of your baby in all positions when playing.
  - Rotate the toys (I.e. aquarium, mirror, other toys, etc).

## **S= Start Day One**

- Start on the first day of life.

## **What if my baby has flat head?**

You need to help reshape your baby's head. Using different positions to keep your baby off the flat part of the head will help. While your baby is awake, you will need to limit the amount of time your baby spends on their back, in the crib, car seat, swing, and bouncy seat.

## **How do I reposition my baby's head while awake?**

- **Tummy time.** Follow directions on page 1.
- **Side lying only while awake.** Lay your baby on either side while awake to play. Put a rolled towel behind the back for support. If your baby falls asleep, be sure to lay your baby on the back. Rest their head on the non-flat side of the head while asleep.
- **Upright baby carrier.** Face your baby toward you if head control is still limited. Face your baby away from you if head control is good.
- **Hold your baby.** This will keep pressure off your baby's head while being held and during feeding. Use interesting toys to help your baby look in the opposite direction of the flat area of the head.
- **Car seat/swing/bouncy seat.** It is harder to keep pressure off the flat area in these. Use these only when needed and only for short periods of time. The Boppy Noggin Nest™ can be used to keep the head in the middle when your baby is in one of these. A towel roll can be used to keep your baby's head from turning toward the flat side.

**Look for helpful products to use while awake for different positions.** Do not use a positioning device for long periods of time.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you **have** any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**