

Positioning Protocol

Frequent changes in your child's position are recommended. Examples are listed below to help improve your child's neck mobility to prevent or to improve an abnormal head shape. If your child's head shape fails to improve by 3 to 4 months of age, contact your doctor.

- Alternate the end of the crib in which you place your baby to sleep.
- Alternate the end of the changing table in which you place your child's head. If you stand or sit at the end of your baby for diaper changes, position yourself slightly off to the side and alternate sides to encourage your baby to move his or her head.
- Place toys on the side of the stroller, swing, crib, or infant seat where neck rotation is most limited.
- Alternate the hip or arm with which you carry your baby. You may notice some fussing and irritability at first because your baby will have to turn in the direction of the neck restriction, but the fussiness will decrease with time.
- Perform both sets of neck-stretching exercises (see *Neck Stretching Exercises for Torticollis* protocol) at each diaper change, as prescribed by your doctor.
- Attempt to interact with your child on the side where neck movement is limited.
- A cushioned head support may be necessary to support your baby's neck when he or she is in the car seat. Infants tend to scrunch up and turn to the side of least resistance.
- Provide *supervised* "tummy time" daily while your baby is awake. Initially, babies often cry and resist this position. Start with just a minute or two of tummy time and gradually increase it as your baby learns to tolerate it. Tummy time will help improve your child's muscle strength and development.

This information is designed for general guidelines only. Your physician may modify these guidelines for your child. If you have specific questions about these instructions or concerns regarding your child's care, contact your physician.

Produced by Barrow Neurological Institute, St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center,
Phoenix, Arizona, and Cranial Technologies, Phoenix, Arizona
© 2001, Barrow Neurological Institute

This handout may be reproduced without permission for the purpose of parent-education.