

Does your infant have a crooked or flat head?

Crooked or flat head

At birth, the baby's skull is flexible and can therefore give way, so that the head takes on an asymmetrical shape, or the baby has a flat back. This happens if the baby always sleeps with its head turned to the same side. Or always lies on its back. A crooked head can be seen by one of the baby's ears and one half of the forehead being pushed forward in relation to the other side. This is most visible if you look at the head from above. From the age of four months, the baby's skull bones and skeleton become more solid. It is therefore important to pay attention to preventing a crooked or flat back of the head.

It is important to put your baby on its stomach as much as possible when it is awake. This way, the baby will quickly train its neck and practice holding its head and using its body evenly. These are skills the infant will need when it later learns to stretch its arms under itself, roll over to the other side, etc., and later again when it gets up on all fours, starts to rock, makes its first crawling movements and later stands up before taking its first steps.

It is therefore fundamental that the child gets used to lying on its stomach. For example, make it a habit to always put your child down on its stomach when it is awake and you are with it. Crooked or flat back of the head can be prevented or trained away with exercises at home by mom and dad.

**The Danish Health Authority recommends:
Infants sleep on their backs**



What can you do:

To correct a crooked head, you can try the following:

- Vary the position of your baby's head. Gently turn the head to the left or right when the baby is sleeping in the car seat, in the bouncer or the cradle/booster.
- Lay your baby on his stomach when you are going to play with him.
- Train your baby to be able to lie on his stomach for longer and longer times while awake.
- Keep an eye on your baby when he is lying on his stomach.
- Do not put him to sleep face down. This increases the risk of sudden unexpected infant death.
- You can place a foam rubber splint or a rolled up towel along your baby's back, so that you make him/her lie slightly on his/her side and sleep.
- When you feed your baby, you can do it from the opposite side of the flat back of the head to stimulate the baby to turn his/her head.
- Also try gently turning the baby's face to the left or right - when he/she is sleeping.
- Position the baby so that he/she has to turn away from the flat side of the back of the head to look at you or to follow movements, lights or sounds in the

When should you seek help?

If you discover that your child's head is asymmetrical, you should consult your doctor or ask your health visitor. If your child is diagnosed with disorders/challenges in the musculoskeletal system, it sometimes makes sense to treat them with a physiotherapist or, in some cases, with chiropractic. Your doctor can guide you in both regards to physiotherapy and chiropractic.

The health visitor can give you good advice on how to prevent a crooked head or a flat head and can help you if it has occurred.

Torticollis:

If the child constantly tilts his head to one side and at the same time cannot turn his head to the other side, it may be a sign that the long muscle at the front of the neck is too tight. This is called torticollis. In this case, the child should see a physiotherapist.