

Growing With Good Alignment

Many babies are born showing a little asymmetry in their face and neck. It is hardly surprising given the cramped conditions they grow in, during the last weeks before being born.

Sometimes a baby's neck is twisted a little to one side. You may find that your baby favours turning to one side, or finds feeding on one side difficult. Torticollis is the name sometimes given to this 'twisted neck', where the sternocleidomastoid (SCM) muscle is more developed on one side than the other.

Subtle degrees of torticollis may correct naturally through plenty of normal moving and stretching, but you can help your baby grow with good alignment..



You can help your baby in many ways

To ease tightness you can give your baby a deep warm bath. Using a little oil, you can gently massage your baby's neck muscles.

When asleep it is best not to swaddle or limit your baby's movements. You may also be able to reposition your baby's head alternating the side to which it is turned, each sleep.

When awake it is good for your baby to have plenty of opportunities to move. Avoid immobilising your baby in a seat, carrier or other device for long periods of time. You might like to wear your baby in a carrier, promoting a little head movement as you move about.

Tummy Time will stimulate your baby's movements

- ♥ A newborns natural 'happy place' is Skin-to-Skin and Tummy-to-Tummy with a familiar human being ☺
- ♥ If you lean back, gravity will help your baby to feel stable and will enable your baby to lift his/her head and turn to the side to look around.



- ♥ With all four limbs making contact your baby gets a pleasant and stimulating sensory experience.
- ♥ In this position, when interested in feeding, your baby will begin moving by his/herself towards your breast to latch on and feed. It's no wonder this is called the 'Biological Position'.
- ♥ Moving your baby's hips will stimulate the Head Righting Reflex, and this in turn stimulates your baby's neck muscles



- You also might like to carry your baby in a sideways position. This position activates the *less used* neck muscle, also by utilising the Head Righting Reflex.
 - Start by holding your baby's body on a 45 degree angle, with the 'tight side' down.
 - Then move your baby's body to a horizontal position
 - The neck muscles on the 'less used side' will try to lift your baby's head up.
 - Hold this position for about 15 minutes, if your baby is okay with it. Return to the 45 degree angle if your baby is finding it uncomfortable, then try again a few minutes later
 - Do this about eight times a day or more. After each nappy change might be a good time.

Body work practitioners, who are experienced with torticollis in babies, can also be of assistance

