

ask the therapist

parents making choices



my baby always holds his head tilted to the same side. why?

Your baby may have a condition called Torticollis (CMT) (wry neck). Diagnosed in 1 of every 250 live births, Torticollis is the 3rd most common congenital musculoskeletal anomaly.

Torticollis (abnormal neck posture) is the inability to straighten the head or turn it equally from side to side. In 75% of cases, baby holds his head tilted to the right with his face and chin turned to the left. You may begin to notice the head tilt between birth and 2 months, but it will generally appear in the 1st week to 10 days after birth.

what causes torticollis?

Torticollis may be the result of a birth trauma that causes bleeding in the muscles of the neck, a vertebral or spinal chord abnormality, premature birth or intrauterine positioning causing a lack of space for baby (the most common cause). None of these things can be prevented by Mommy!

how do I know if my baby may have torticollis?

If baby always keeps her head tilted to the same side when sleeping or she always turns her head to one side and rotates her face to the opposite side you should have baby evaluated.

what happens if its not treated?

As baby grows, his face on the affected side may flatten, eye orbits may appear different in size, the skull may change shape/flatten on one side and one ear may appear forward of the other. Overall development can be affected as baby's musculature has become uneven.

i think my baby may have torticollis. what next?

Speak with your pediatrician and have your baby referred for a pediatric physical therapy evaluation and treatment. Your baby's treatment will be a partnership between parents, therapist and pediatrician. Parents will learn and perform daily stretching exercises, positioning and play activities to promote strength and alignment of the baby's head and neck. Play and vision exercises determined by the therapist will promote your baby's desire for movement and overall development. If discovered/treated early, 80% of Torticollis cases are corrected with no long-term effects.

how long is the treatment?

Length of treatment is dependent on baby's response to treatment and the consistency of treatment and home exercise/intervention, but babies are usually seen weekly until they have mastered sitting/crawling/standing and beginning walking.



Meet the Therapist

Denise Kilburn PT specializes in pediatric physical therapy. She, her partner Kathy Shufflebarger & a team of PT, OT and ST's working together with families create a therapy place where children learn, laugh & leap.

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