

Positioning, Tummy Time and Exercise

Plagiocephaly is very common because infant skull bones are designed to move to allow for brain growth. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends positioning, tummy time, and exercise, to help improve or avoid skull bone flattening and strengthen neck muscles.

Below are some ideas; speak with your Primary Care Provider (PCP), or find more ideas online.

If you notice a flat spot on baby's skull, continue positioning and notify your PCP.

1. Positioning

- position baby supine (*on their back*) starting at birth or within a few hours
 - rotate baby's head side-to-side regularly while supine to avoid flattening on one side, until they are strong enough to do this on their own
 - counterposition baby on alternate ends of the crib, to encourage them to turn their heads
 - continue positioning up to age 1 year, even after baby self-positions
 - follow Safe Sleep recommendations
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2. Tummy time

- encourages babies to lift and turn their head, exercises and strengthens neck and back muscles
 - tummy time includes any time baby is facing the floor; for example:
 - when carried face down in a football hold
 - when lying facedown across knees, lap, or couch
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3. Exercise

- dress in clothing that protect but allows freedom to move head, shoulders, arms, legs
- avoid clothing, blankets and swaddles that restrict movement
- avoid prolonged immobility, and devices that restrict head movement in carriers, seats, cribs
- alternate right and left sides for feeding and holding
- provide a firm mattress, which allows baby leverage to push and roll; avoid spongy bassinet and playpen mattresses
- during playtime, alternate between supine and prone (*on tummy*) positions
- alternate sides for placement of toys to encourage turning and reaching movement
- provide playtime on a firm surface (play mat, rug) that baby can push against
- alternate placement of toys to encourage reaching and turning