



**NATIONWIDE
CHILDREN'S**

When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™

Helping Hand™

Exercises: Right Torticollis Positioning for Play

Right torticollis (tor ti COLL iss) is a tightening of the muscles on the right side of the neck. It results in your child frequently bending his or her head to the right side and looking to the left side. Your child may not be able to easily turn his or her head to the right due to the muscle tightness. If this is not corrected, it can lead to continued muscle tightness, changes in head shape, and uneven facial appearance (right and left sides of the face do not match). Torticollis can also affect the way your child plays, uses his or her hands, and explores his or her surroundings.

Helping your child exercise, carrying the child properly, and putting him or her into the right position for play can help to correct torticollis. The earlier the exercises are started, the easier this condition is to correct. Physical therapy may be recommended to teach you specific stretching and strengthening exercises that you can do with your child.

Positioning for play

Playing on the stomach: When your child is awake, it is very important that he or she spend time on the tummy for play. When your child is on his or her tummy on the floor, place all toys so the child has to turn to face the RIGHT (Picture 1). **Always be sure someone is watching when your child is on his or her tummy.**

Never place your child on the tummy to sleep.



Picture 1 Supervised tummy time, active play.

Carrying your child

Hold the child facing away from you, in a side-lying position, with the RIGHT ear resting against your RIGHT forearm (Picture 2).

Put your forearm between your child's right ear and shoulder to help stretch the tight muscles. You can use your forearm to lift your child's head away from his or her shoulder to get a side-bending stretch. Place your LEFT arm between the child's legs to support the body. Grasp the right shoulder with your left hand.

Carry your child in this position as much as possible.



Picture 2 How to carry your child.

Other suggestions

1. Hold toys so that your child has to turn his or her head to the RIGHT.
2. When playing, put toys and activities on your child's RIGHT side to encourage him or her to turn the head to the RIGHT.
3. While bottle-feeding your child, position him or her to encourage the child to turn the head to the RIGHT.
4. When not in the car, do not use the car seat as a place to put your child for playtime or to sleep.

These exercises alone may not correct your child's torticollis. Your child's physician may also order physical therapy, x-rays, or an eye exam.

If you have questions, be sure to ask _____ or call _____.