



## Counter-positioning

The idea of counter-positioning is to help the skull reshape itself by placing baby in a way that takes the pressure off of the flat spot.

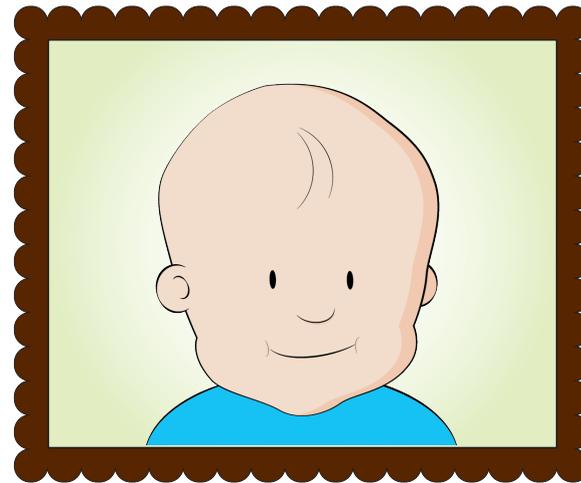
- It is most effective in infants under 6 months of age, because at 6 months, babies tend to be more mobile and it is more difficult to keep them in the counter-position.
- Keep baby directly off of her back, usually at a 45 degree angle. Use a rolled up towel behind her to achieve that position.

If these suggestions do not seem to be working, contact your health care provider again.

## What if my baby has a flat spot?

Baby flathead can be corrected. See your health care provider right away.

Do not delay as baby flathead can get worse, or it can be more difficult to treat.



## References

1. THE HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN. You Can Prevent Baby Flathead (leaflet), Toronto, 2003.
2. CENTRE HOSPITALIER UNIVERSITAIRE DE SHERBROOKE (CHUS). Preventing Plagiocephaly in Your Baby: Information for Parents (booklet), Sherbrooke, 2011.
3. BC CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL. A Clinician's Guide to Plagiocephaly, Vancouver, 2008.

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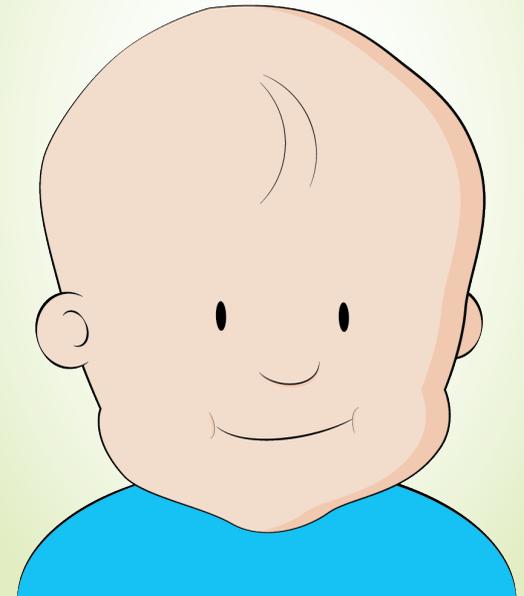
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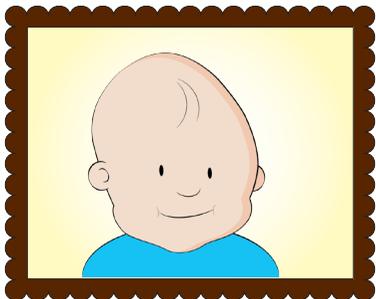
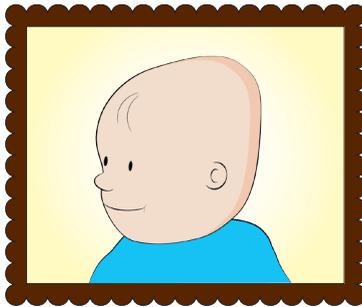
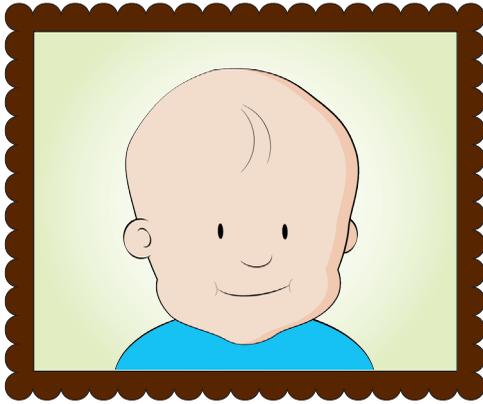


# Baby Flathead

## How to prevent flat spots on baby's head

## What is baby flathead?

Baby flathead (*positional plagiocephaly*) is the flattening of an infant's skull which usually happens in the first 3 months. Though it can affect the shape of the head or face, it does not affect infant's brain or cause other medical issues.



Flat spots on the side of the head can cause your baby's ears to be uneven.

## What causes baby flathead?

For the first year, baby's skull is soft and can easily change shape. In the first few months, your infant can spend a lot of time in one position.

If baby spends too much time in one position, the constant pressure on the skull can cause it to flatten in certain spots.

Studies have shown that it is safer for baby to sleep on his back, to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Baby flathead can also occur because infants tend to have positional preference, which means they prefer looking to one side over the other.

If baby is spending time awake on his back or sitting in an infant car seat, the flat spots tend to appear on the sides of the head (for example, if baby tends to look to the right, the flat spot will occur on the right side of the head).



## Tummy Time

- When baby is awake and fully supervised, place her on her tummy a few times a day.
- Tummy time keeps baby off of her head and it helps her muscles get stronger.
- Place a rolled up towel under baby's chest to help support her.
- Start by placing her on your chest or knees to get her used to the idea.
- If baby does not like being on her tummy, place interesting toys in front of her to distract her.
- You can also get down on the floor with your baby to interact and to provide comfort.
- Start with short sessions then slowly increase tummy time to make sure baby feels safe in this position.

## Can baby flathead be corrected?

There are many things you can do to help prevent or correct flathead.

### Repositioning

- Change your infant's position often when he is awake to prevent constant pressure to one spot on his head.
- Encourage baby to look to the side he does not prefer by distracting him with an interesting toy. You can practice this with him in your arms, or if he is lying in his crib.
- When your baby is lying on the floor to play, place him on his side, and put a rolled up towel behind him so that it keeps him from rolling onto his back. Change sides often to avoid constant pressure.
- Encourage baby to look in different directions at night. Place him in the crib so that his head is at a different end every other night. Baby tends to look out into the room.
- Use front or back carriers for infants.
- Limit the amount of time your infant spends in a car seat, reclined chair, and similar seats. They make contact with baby's head and cause pressure on the flat spots.