



TWIN FALLS

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Physical,
Occupational,
&
Speech
Therapy

providing
one-on-one
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clients

Torticollis & Plagiocephaly

Congenital Muscular Torticollis (CMT) refers to tight muscles on one side of a child's neck. It usually causes a child's head to be tilted to one side and/or turned to the opposite side.

Plagiocephaly (play-jee-o-SEF-a-lee) is an abnormal head shape that lasts beyond 6 weeks after birth. An infant's skull is soft to allow for growth. If a child is in the same position for too long a flat spot can form. It can also include:

- Forehead and cheek bulging
- One ear pushed forward
- A tilted jaw
- One eye appearing larger than the other
- Flattening on the back or side of the head

Potential Causes of Torticollis and Plagiocephaly

Torticollis:

- Positioning in the womb
- Lack of oxygen to neck muscles
- Trauma during birth

Plagiocephaly:

- Too much time in one position
- Presence of torticollis
- Lack of tummy time
- Premature birth



Imbalance in muscle strength

- Prolonged time in car seat
- Complications during birth
- Positioning in utero

Treatment Options for Torticollis and Plagiocephaly

Physical therapy can be very effective for torticollis and plagiocephaly.

Starting treatment early in life improves the success rate.

Physical therapy may include:

- Education about the conditions
- Stretching tight muscles
- Strengthening weak muscles

Importance of Tummy Time

Tummy time allows your baby to:

- Develop strong muscles on the back of his body
- Stretch muscles on the front of his body
- Improve body awareness
- Develop balance and weight shifting
- Help prevent torticollis and plagiocephaly
- Roll, crawl, pull to stand and walk earlier than babies who do not have tummy time



Tummy time can begin the first day your baby is home from the hospital. While your child is awake, play with him for short periods of time (3-5 minutes) while he is on his tummy 2-3 times each day. Increase time as your baby shows enjoyment with activity.

Sleeping Positions

In 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics began the "Back to Sleep" program. This program has decreased the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by 40%. It is important for your baby to sleep on his back, but this has led to an increased risk of developing torticollis and plagiocephaly. Here are a few tips to promote normal head shape: Alternate which end of the crib you place the baby's feet. This will encourage your baby to turn his head toward light or objects in different positions.

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