

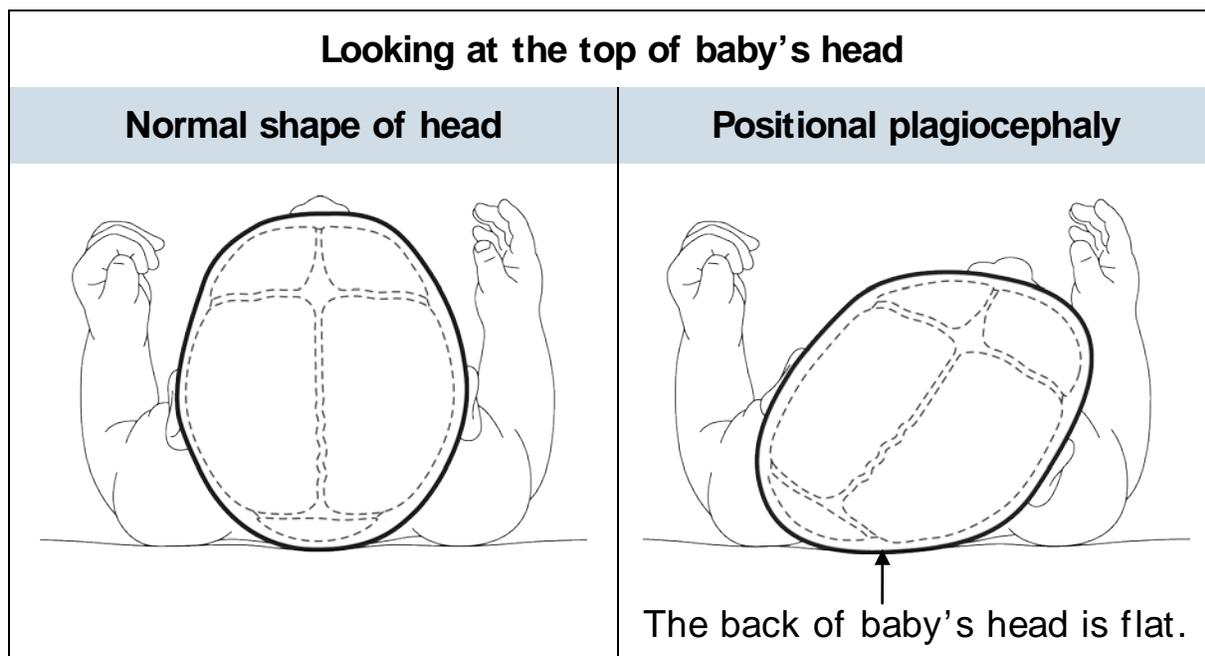
## Positional Plagiocephaly

### What is positional plagiocephaly?

Positional plagiocephaly is a flattening at the back of the skull that usually becomes noticeable at 3 to 4 months of age.

When a baby is born, the bones of his or her skull are like a jigsaw puzzle that can expand to give room for the brain to grow. As the bones are not joined together, they can be shaped by the baby's position and activity. If the baby spends a lot of time on his or her back, the back of the head can become moulded into a flat shape.

Positional plagiocephaly is simply a change in the shape of the head. It does not affect brain development.



## **What causes positional plagiocephaly?**

The most common cause is the length of time babies spend on their backs. Babies must sleep on their backs and if they also spend much of their awake time in this position, the back of their heads can become flattened.

Some babies have limited neck movement and tend to only turn their head to one side. This condition is called torticollis. If babies do not move their head to both sides, their heads can become flattened.

## **How is positional plagiocephaly treated?**

Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep, both at nap time and at bedtime. This has proven to be the safest position for sleep.

When your baby is awake, he or she should spend as little time as possible lying on his or her back.

For babies 5 to 6 months of age, changing positions is most effective. Some recommendations include:

- Spend 'tummy time' with your baby when he or she is awake.
- Limit the time spent in car seats to travel time only.
- Limit time spent in swings and bouncy chairs.
- Encourage your child to turn his or her head to the desired side. Place something interesting for your baby to see on the desired side or change the position of the car seat or crib.

At around 6 months of age babies begin to sit up on their own, which helps with reshaping the head. After 12 months of age, repositioning is no longer helpful, but the head shape will continue to improve with normal growth and development.

If your child has torticollis, we will arrange for your child to see a Physiotherapist for assessment and treatment.