

Plagiocephaly

Do you have concerns that your child may have a head turn preference or a change in head shape?

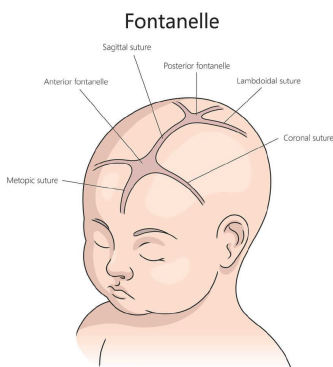
Let's have a chat! Physiotherapists commonly assess and treat head turn preferences, usually in conjunction with a change in head shape which can be referred to as a Plagiocephaly or Brachycephaly.

What is Plagiocephaly?

Plagiocephaly is an extremely common condition where your baby's head may develop a flat spot on one side. It can cause the head to appear misshapen. However, this is purely a cosmetic change in the skull shape and does not affect typical development.

Brachycephaly is similar to plagiocephaly, however your baby's head may develop a flat spot at the back of the skull, causing the skull to appear flattened. Like plagiocephaly, this does not affect typical development, however can result in cosmetic changes if left untreated.

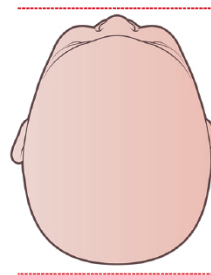
How does this happen?



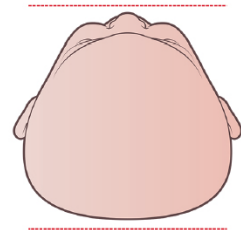
The time that this shape appears on the head usually tells clinicians how this has formed. Sometimes a plagiocephaly can develop during the womb or after birth due to the pressure of the birth canal or instruments used during birth. This is often referred to as 'molding' and typically resolves soon after birth.

Some head shape changes develop in the months following birth. All babies have a soft spot on the top of their head called

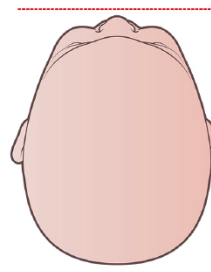
Normal anatomy



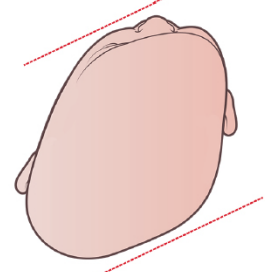
Brachycephaly



Normal anatomy



Plagiocephaly



the 'anterior fontanelle'. This soft spot remains open as the skull continues to form. During this time the baby's skull bones are very soft resulting in the skull changing shape very easily. If the child prefers to have their head turned to one side or sleep on one side, these bones can change shape from the constant pressure on the skull in these positions. This can also result from tight neck muscles preventing the baby from moving their head left to right equally.

How do I know my baby doesn't need a helmet?

Currently evidence recommends that physiotherapy intervention and incorporation of positioning strategies are much more effective for the resolution of mild to moderate plagiocephaly.

What is the role of Physiotherapy in the treatment of head turn preference, plagiocephaly and torticollis?

If you're concerned that your child has developed a head turn preference, a head shape deformity or it has been suggested that your baby may have developed a torticollis, it is essential to book bub in for a consultation with a physiotherapist at Alchemy in Motion.

A consult may involve:

1. Measurement of head circumference
2. Assessment of the anterior fontanelle and cranial sutures
3. Developmental assessment to check progress on normal development
4. Thorough cervical assessment to rule out any abnormal development of musculature
5. A discussion of possible recommendations for wake windows, positioning tailored to your baby
6. An outline of how your baby is tracking for general developmental milestones

Our team can provide constant reassurance and education on various aspects of play, positioning and strategies to ensure support for you and your baby.

If you're concerned before your first appointment with us, try to avoid searching the web for answers. Although it is tempting, the web can be very general and outline various treatment options and various types of conditions. Our initial assessment will ensure the education and treatment is tailored towards your bub.