

Information for Patients

Many babies develop changes in the shape of their skull during their first few months of life. This is a natural process that does not cause any harm. Medical evidence tells us that the use of a helmet does not change skull growth or shape and is no more effective than allowing your baby's head to mould naturally. Sometimes the use of helmets may cause harm to babies.

About the condition

Flattening to the side or the back of a baby's head is very common. It usually occurs due to the amount of time babies spend laid in a particular position during their first months of life. The flattened skull shape does not cause any harm to babies. Very rarely, an unusual shape to a baby's head may be related to problems with the way the skull bones are joining up and then the baby will be referred to specialist doctors.

What are the **BENEFITS** of the therapy?

There are no benefits to the use of helmet therapy.

What are the **RISKS**?

Helmet therapy may lead to pain and pressure sores. It may also affect the bond between you and your baby because the helmet needs to be worn all day.

What are the **ALTERNATIVES**?

There are several ways you can help your baby to not lie on the flattened part of their head so that the shape is corrected naturally.

- 1) Allow your baby to spend time lying on their tummy, but only while they are awake and supervised. All babies must be laid on their backs to sleep, to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.
- 2) Change the position of toys, mobiles and the cot in the room to encourage your baby to move their head away from the flattened side.
- 3) Use a sling or a front carrier to carry your baby to reduce the amount of time they spend lying on a firm flat surface.
- 4) When holding your baby against you, try and encourage them to put the non-flattened side of their head against you.

What if you do **NOTHING**?

The flattened area of a baby's head usually corrects itself naturally as the baby grows and becomes more mobile, because they spend less time in one position.

You can speak with your Health Visitor for more advice.

More information at [plagiocephaly and brachycephaly \(flat head syndrome\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

You can find out more about the [Evidence Based Interventions](#) programme online