

Congenital Muscular Torticollis (CMT): 5 Tips for Positioning and Play to Help your Newborn Baby's Posture and Movement Development

Follow these tips from the time your baby is born unless otherwise directed by your doctor or other medical professional.

1 Center baby's head and body

Correct head and body position so neither are off to one side for extended periods of time.



Center head and body while in the car seat.



Put your baby in your lap facing you.

2 Encourage baby to look both ways



Alternate holding baby on your left and right arm while feeding.



Put interesting infant toys on both sides of your baby.

3 Back to sleep



Your baby should always sleep on his/her back. Turn your baby's head to the opposite side each night to prevent a flat spot from developing on one side.



You may also alternate which side is the "head of the bed" when placing baby in crib each night. This helps baby turn to each side to see out of the crib.

4 Tummy to play while awake and supervised



At least 3 times each day,
place your baby on his/her
tummy to play.

During the first 6 months, supervised tummy time while awake helps your baby's motor development.



All above photographs used with permission from Children's Hospital of Atlanta "Tummy Time Tools".
Available at: www.choa.org/parent-resources/orthopedics/tummy-time-tools

5 Minimize time in "containers"



Limit baby's time in infant positioning equipment (such as car seats and strollers) to only the time your baby is being transported.

Minimize the time your infant spends in other infant positioning equipment (such as infant swings, bouncy seats, and infant/toddler rockers).



DO:

1. Hold your baby in your arms or using a sling instead of a container.
2. Allow baby to play freely in a playpen or on a blanket on the floor with adult supervision.
3. Remember tummy time to play!

American Physical Therapy Association ChoosePT "Container Baby Syndrome". Available at: www.choosept.com/symptomsconditionsdetail/physical-therapy-guide-to-container-baby-syndrome



5 signs of Congenital Muscular Torticollis to watch for:

Monitor for these early signs of CMT (neck muscle tightness and movement preference).

Talk to your physician/medical provider about seeing a physical therapist if you notice:

1. Baby holds head tilted or turned to one side.
2. Baby struggles more with nursing or feeding on one side.
3. Baby's head is flat on one side on the front or back.
4. Baby avoids turning head to one side.
5. Baby prefers to use one hand more when reaching or putting hand to mouth.



Photograph used with permission



If you notice signs of Congenital Muscular Torticollis, start Physical Therapy

Starting physical therapy as soon as possible gives your baby the **best chance for the best outcome.**

98% of infants with CMT achieve normal range of motion **within 1.5 months of PT intervention** if it is started before one month of age.

For more info: **APTA Pediatrics CMT Clinical Practice Guideline** | pediatricapta.org/clinical-practice-guidelines

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