

Left head turning preference:

- Turn your baby's cot so they have to look to the right to see you.
- Place visual stimuli on their right (toys, TV, etc.) to encourage them to look that way.
- Turn your baby's head to the right when they are sleeping.
- During tummy time, encourage them to lift their head and look to the right.
- When your baby is awake, try putting them on their right side. You may need to put something behind them (rolled towel/blanket) to stop them rolling back.
- If bottle fed, hold them with their head on your left arm to encourage them to look to their right for their bottle.
- When holding your baby against your shoulder, place them on your left to encourage them to look to the right.
- Use a baby sling sometimes instead of a car seat/buggy to avoid constant pressure on one side of their head.

Contact details:

- **Inpatient Paediatrics – Ward 25:** 01623 622515, extension 6181 or 3063.
- **Outpatient Children's Therapy Centre:** 01623 622515, extension 3370 or 3256.

Further sources of information

NHS: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our Website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

Kings Mill Hospital: 01623672222

Newark Hospital: 01636685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you. External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202601-04-PHTP
Created: June 2020/ Revised: January 2026/ Review
Date: January 2028

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, GUARDIANS AND CARERS

Paediatric Physiotherapy

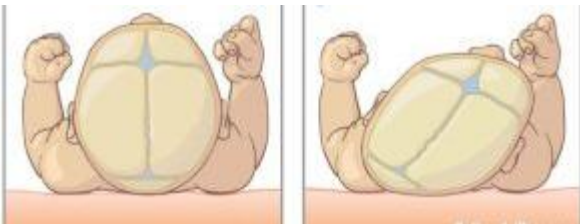
Plagiocephaly and head turning preference



What is plagiocephaly?

If you have noticed that your baby is developing a flat spot on the back or side of their head, it could be due to a head turning preference and a sign of plagiocephaly.

As babies' skulls are soft, they are prone to being 'moulded' into a flat shape if they spend a long time lying in the same position. Your baby's ear may be pushed forwards on the flattened side, and the face may be asymmetric. This is cosmetic and does not cause any pressure on the brain.



Possible causes

- Tight neck muscles – your baby may require stretches, which your physiotherapist will teach you.

- Sleep position – if your baby always lies in the same position when they are asleep, it can cause flattening to one side of the head.
- Prematurity – babies that are born too early have softer skulls, making them more prone to flattening.
- Lack of tummy time – it is essential all babies experience being on their tummy while they are awake and supervised, at least every day. It is recommended however, that all babies sleep on their backs.
- Car seats – try to use only when your baby is actually in the car.

What can I do?

Encourage your baby to be in different positions so their head is not always lying in the same position. As your baby learns to move and the pressure is taken off the flattened area of the skull, the head shape can start to improve.

Right head turning preference:

- Turn your baby's cot so they have to look to the left to see you.
- Place visual stimuli (toys, TV, etc.) on their left to encourage them to look that way.
- Turn your baby's head to the left when they are sleeping.
- Encourage tummy time; encourage them to lift their head and look to the left.
- When your baby is awake, try putting them on their left side. You may need to put something behind them (rolled towel/blanket) to stop them rolling back.
- If bottle fed, hold them with their head on your right arm to encourage them to look to their left for their bottle.
- When holding your baby against your shoulder, place them on your right to encourage them to look to the left.
- Use a baby sling sometimes instead of a car seat/buggy to avoid constant pressure on one side of their head.