

# Plagiocephaly and Brachycephaly

## Does my child need a helmet?

*The decision is up to you.*



### Plagiocephaly

Flattening on side of head

### Brachycephaly

Flattening on the back of head

### Asymmetric Brachycephaly

Flattening on the back of head, more to one side.

### How did my child get a flat spot?

Babies can develop flat spots on their head for a number of reasons. It might be due to the birth process, because of tight neck muscles (torticollis) or due to having a preference to sleep on one side or straight back on their head.

### What can I do to correct this flat spot? Do I have to get a helmet?

No, a helmet is not the only option for correcting head shape. For the head to correct, it needs to have time without pressure on the flat spot. Tummy time, and repositioning so that your baby spends less time on their flat spot will help the head shape correct.

### What will happen if I don't fix their head shape?

Nothing! Plagiocephaly and brachycephaly are cosmetic conditions. If the head shape doesn't correct, your baby will have a flat head visually, but they won't have any cognitive issues. Brain development still occurs normally; it's just the skull shape that is flat.

### What happens at an assessment? Is the scan safe?

We will start with a discussion about your concerns in regards to your baby's head shape. We will also chat about anything you have already tried to do to fix it, and any changes so far, to find out more about your situation.

After the discussion, we will take a scan of your baby's head using our 3D scanner. Your baby will be seated in a bumbo seat for the scan. The scanner we use is a non-invasive 3D structured white light scanner. It takes less than 1 minute to complete the scan.

After the scan the software provides an image of your baby's head shape, and the software can take measurements off that. We will discuss these measurements with you.

We will also go through the information provided on this sheet and answer any additional questions.

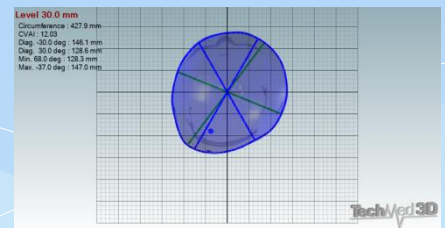
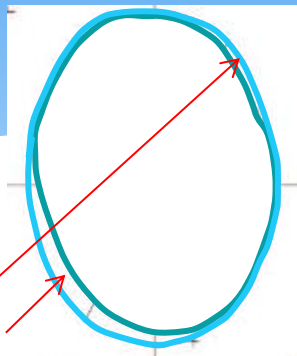


Image produced by scanner

### Why would I choose a helmet?

If you are struggling to reposition your baby or keep them off the flat spot then a helmet will allow them to sleep on their back/side without any pressure on the flat spot, therefore allowing it to grow. Our research here at Orthokids shows helmets allow the head to make greater changes faster.



Area in helmet for head to grow into

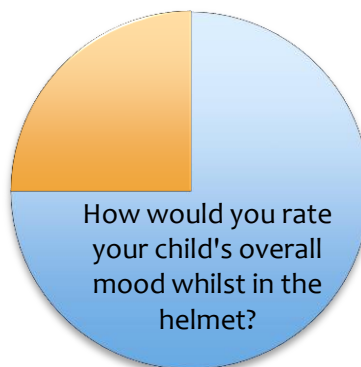
### How does a helmet work? Does it push my babies head into shape?

A helmet works by applying a slight, constant pressure over the high areas of the head, whilst leaving space for the flat areas to grow out. The head isn't "pushed" back into shape, it is corrected as the head grows.

The image here shows the head shape as the green line and the outline of the helmet as blue. The helmet contacts the head on the high areas, and there is room to grow over the flat areas.

### Will my baby tolerate a helmet? Will it be uncomfortable? Will it hurt them?

Babies are very tolerant, it might take them a few days to get used to it, but then they will be fine. We have surveyed parents of babies who have had helmets and they show us there is little to no change in sleep patterns or behaviour. Of course there is always the exception to the rule, but we aim for every baby to be comfortable and happy in their helmet.



- No change to disposition
- Slight change in behaviour
- moderately upset
- very distressed



- better than previously
- no change to sleep pattern
- worse than previously

### If I got a helmet how long would my baby need to wear it for?

Helmets are worn 23hours a day to get optimal results. Length of wear varies depending on the severity of the head shape, age of your baby and results between scans. We cannot predict how long your child will need to wear the helmet for, but when we assess you we can give you more information regarding this.

Any other questions or concerns? Jot them down here so you don't forget to ask at the appointment:

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Children's Bracing and Orthotic Specialists

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