

Cranial Remodelling Helmet

Client Information

The Orthokids Helmet, or cranial remodelling orthosis, is used to treat babies between 4 and 12 months of age for asymmetrical head shapes, such as positional plagiocephaly and brachycephaly.



The Orthokids Helmet is custom-made for your baby, utilising state-of-the-art 3D scanning and computer design.



How does the helmet work?

The Helmet works by relieving pressure over the flat spot on your baby's head.

The Helmet is designed to guide the new growth to the flatter spots on the head. It does not push or squeeze the head; it uses directed growth to improve the shape.

If there is no head growth, there will be no change in the shape, therefore treatment can be a bit of a waiting game.

Putting the Helmet on, and taking it off

1. With the strap on the helmet facing away from you, place your fingers inside the side closure of the helmet and pull the sides apart. There is no chance of breaking the helmet.



2. Slide it over your baby's head and once roughly in position, release the edges slowly.



3. Position the helmet so that the ears are in the spaces provided and the front of the helmet is just above the eyebrows.



4. Pinch the opening together and secure the Velcro strap. The helmet should be done up firmly however there may be a small gap.



To remove, undo the Velcro, place your fingers on the edges of the side opening, pull the edges apart and lift the helmet off.

Introduction to wearing the Helmet

The Helmet should be introduced over four days with the following regime as a guide.

This allows your baby to become totally at ease with their Helmet before using it overnight.

Day one (day of fitting) - 2 hours on, one hour off.

When your baby has a sleep, remove their Helmet and start again on waking.

Day two - 3 hours on, 1 hour off, remove for sleeps.

Day three - 4 hours on, 1 hour off, continue Helmet use through daytime sleeps. You do not need to wear the helmet overnight.

Day four - Full time (23/24 hours) including night-time

If you reach day 4 and your baby won't go to sleep, or has woken up and cannot be settled, remove their Helmet and try again the next day. It is not uncommon for some people to repeat 'day 3' a couple of times.

These timelines are only a guide. Your baby may take longer to get used to their Helmet. We do not recommend rushing the introduction of their Helmet. It is important that when you remove the Helmet you also check your baby's skin for any excessive pressure areas.

Increase in Body Temperature

Even though the Helmet is ventilated, it will make your baby a little warmer. It is important to make sure your baby is not overheating.

Dressing down a layer (maybe leave off a singlet) and monitor sweatiness on the neck and arms. If they are getting sweaty in these areas, they are probably too hot.

If your baby looks like they are getting too hot, remove their Helmet and remove a layer of clothing or change to a cooler item of clothing. Re-apply the Helmet once they have cooled down.

All babies get a sweaty head under the helmet, even in winter.

Cleaning your Helmet

The best time for an hour off is at bath time. It is vitally important to keep the helmet clean, as skin rashes can develop easily due to moisture and heat retention of the helmet.

The foam on the inside of the helmet doesn't soak up any sweat or water, but it can become smelly and discoloured over time.

Cleaning should consist of giving the inside of the helmet a light scrub with a face washer every time you bath your baby. It is quite ok to fully immerse the helmet in bathwater to wash it out. The helmet can be simply towelled dry.

Antibacterial wipes (scentless) are handy for keeping your helmet clean.

Potential Problems

Helmet Shifting/ Lifting/ Tilting

To allow your baby's head to grow in the correct areas, we build space into the Helmet. As a result, your baby's Helmet will move around a little on their head, especially in the first few weeks of use.

A small amount of movement is acceptable, and you may find yourself repositioning the Helmet a few times a day.

If the ears are being squashed significantly or the helmet drops consistently over the eyes, an adjustment at our clinic is needed.

Sometimes it is very difficult to stop the Helmet shifting and occasionally multiple attempts at rectifying the problem are necessary.

For interstate clients, we can sometimes refer you to a local clinician who may be able to help with these adjustments. Please be prepared to come back to see us if a major adjustment is needed.

Skin rashes

Rashes are normal in the helmet due to the moisture and heat retention of the helmet. If you do notice a rash forming, remove the helmet to allow the skin to dry out, wash the hair and disinfect the surface of the foam inside the helmet with an alcohol wipe or other scentless disinfectant that is safe to use against skin.

Babies with pre-existing eczema can be prone to skin irritation when wearing their Helmet. We recommend using the cream you would normally use to help with this irritation.

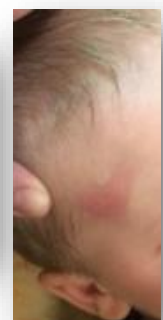
If you have any concerns, we recommend taking a photo of the area and sending it through to our email for one of our Clinical Care team to have a look at and follow up with you.

Pressure marks

Pressure marks (see images) are normal. You may find that when you remove the helmet some pressure marks remain on the skin - this is normal. The helmet applies pressure to the "high spot" of the head. Without this mild pressure, the helmet will not work.

Infrequently, they may appear as angry red marks or welts.

This sometimes occurs during a growth spurt, or if the helmet is shifting too far into an incorrect position. If the skin is broken, remove the



helmet and call Orthokids. Sometimes we just leave the helmet off until the skin looks better, at other times we will need to adjust the helmet.

If you are concerned that a pressure area is too red, you can send through an email with a picture for us to check and/or book a review appointment.

Eyebrow droop

The Helmet firmly contacts the high spot on your baby's forehead. During normal movement it can tend to push the eyebrows down.

If this happens, simply release the tension on the skin by undoing the Velcro strap and lifting the helmet off the forehead. The skin will bounce back. It takes a second to fix and it causes no long-term changes to the skin around the eyebrow.



Review Appointments

Reviews of the Helmet and your baby's head are undertaken every 4-6 weeks. At these appointments, we scan the head to check for growth and discuss any changes with you. We assess the fit of the Helmet to ensure there is still adequate room for growth.

We understand that some people travel a long way to get a Helmet from us and are happy to stretch out the time between those review appointments in some circumstances. If any issues arise, they can be easily fixed, however, to do so we need to see your baby at our clinic. We understand this can be inconvenient for families if they must travel, but these appointments are necessary for a well-fitting Helmet.

If you are concerned about an issue with your baby's Helmet a review can be organised as soon as possible. Sometimes it is possible for you to send us through some pictures and we can let you know via email if the concern warrants a visit or if it's nothing to worry about.

Wearing Time/ Expectations

For best results, we recommend the Helmet is worn 23 out of 24 hours a day for a period of eight to 24 weeks (average time is 16 weeks). The length of time for treatment depends on the severity of your baby's misshapen head, their age and the amount of growth that occurs. Generally, the older the baby, the longer the treatment takes.

If the Helmet is taken off for extended periods of time (before you have been discharged from treatment) there is a high chance that the head shape may stay the same or in some cases worsen. Extended periods of time without wearing the Helmet will affect the fit of the helmet and therefore may mean we need to reassess the treatment plan.

For this reason, the more time your baby is in their Helmet, the better the results.

Results

Head shape improvement is unpredictable.

We tend to see changes in head shape when there is overall head growth. If there is no head growth or minimal head growth, there will be no change in head shape. The age of your baby and head circumference can influence head growth and related changes.

Results are also linked to wearing time. To achieve the best result, we recommend 23 hours wear per day. If you decide to reduce this time, your results and helmet fit will be compromised.

The Helmet directs head growth into specific 'flat spot' areas. If you do not wear your Helmet for 23 hours a day, the growth will not be directed into these 'flat spot' areas.

Completion of treatment

During treatment, your baby will reach a point where growth slows down and the benefits of the Helmet will be reduced. Most of the time this is at a point where the improvement is satisfactory and there is no benefit in continuing treatment. At this stage, your clinician will discuss expectations and options to cease or continue with treatment.

A small percentage of babies will outgrow the Helmet, and a second Helmet may be required to achieve a satisfactory level of correction. This usually happens when the circumference of the head can no longer be adequately contained within the Helmet and the fit is compromised. A second Helmet is more likely in severe cases where a significant correction in head shape is required. There is an additional cost associated with a second Helmet.