



Torticollis

This handout will provide exercises and tips for the treatment of LEFT torticollis.

Left-sided torticollis is a tightening of the muscles on the left side of the neck. This means that your child's head is always tilted to the left and may be rotated to the right. Your child may not be able to keep their head in the middle or turn to look to the left fully. Without treatment, this can lead to changes in head shape (plagiocephaly), eating problems, and changes to facial appearance. As a child grows, torticollis can also negatively affect the way a child plays, uses his hands, and develops gross motor skills.

Stretching

These activities are best completed on a changing table or the floor but can ultimately be done anywhere. You can work these in with every diaper change or wherever it fits best into your schedule, but try to complete them as often as possible throughout the day. Your child should be lying in front of you with their feet towards you.

Side Bending Exercise

- Hold your child's LEFT shoulder down with your RIGHT hand.
- Place your LEFT hand on top of the LEFT side of your child's head.
- Slowly bend your child's RIGHT ear towards their RIGHT shoulder.
- Hold this position for as long as your child allows (up to 30 seconds).
- Repeat as often as possible throughout the day.



Rotation Exercise

- Place your RIGHT hand on your child's RIGHT shoulder.
- Cup the back of your child's head with your LEFT hand.
- Use your LEFT hand to slowly turn your child's chin towards their LEFT shoulder.
- Repeat this as often as possible throughout the day.





Positioning Tips

You can utilize these positions throughout the day for playing to encourage strengthening of weak muscles and gross motor skill development.

Side-lying: Position your child so that they can play while lying on their side. When lying on the right side, gravity will provide a stretch for the left side of their neck. When lying on their left side, strengthening will occur for the left side of their neck. Encourage your child to bring their hands to midline when in side-lying. This will assist with feeding, hand/eye coordination, and using two hands together.

Tummy Time: When your child is awake, it is very important that they be placed on their belly to play. This allows them to develop improved head and trunk control. Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep. The gold standard for tummy time is 1 hour per day. This can be in small increments as your child tolerates. Place toys on the left side of your child's body to encourage them to rotate their head to the left.

Carrying Tips

Hold your child facing away from you in a side-lying position (football hold). Your child's LEFT ear should be resting against your LEFT forearm. Your LEFT forearm should be between your child's shoulder and LEFT ear in order to provide a stretch when holding your child. Your RIGHT arm should be between your child's legs and you can grasp your child's LEFT shoulder with your RIGHT hand in order to provide a greater stretch.



Other Tips for LEFT Torticollis:

1. Hold toys when child is on their back or tummy so that they have to look to the LEFT to see them.
2. Position your child in the crib so they are encouraged to look to the LEFT. Children are often motivated to see mom or dad walk into the room, so you may want to position them so they have to look to the LEFT to see the door.
3. Position your child to face LEFT when bottle-feeding.
4. When holding your child across your shoulder, place them so they face LEFT.
5. Do not allow your child to sleep in the car seat and only utilize the car seat in the car.
6. Limit time spent in swings, rock n plays, exersaucers, bouncers, etc. Floor time is best when possible.
7. You can utilize a towel roll or blanket roll between the LEFT ear and shoulder when in a car seat or swing.