

**Division of Pediatric Orthopaedics**

**Sanjeev Sabharwal, MD**

**Flo Edobor-Osula, MD**

Emily McClemens, PA-C    Michele Gilliland, PA-C

**Phone: (973) 972-0246**

**PEDSORTHO@NJMS.RUTGERS.EDU**

**Torticollis: Right Head Turn (Level One Exercise Program)**

**What is Torticollis?**

Torticollis is also known as "congenital muscular torticollis." It happens when the muscles in the neck become too tight. Some muscles become strong and other muscles become weak. Your baby may prefer to turn their head one way or may have a head tilt.

Your baby likes to turn their head to the right and tilt it to the left. If torticollis is not corrected, your baby may have problems with their neck, body, arms, legs, vision or head shape as they grow.




***How is torticollis treated?***




Exercises and activities are used to help your baby stretch out the muscles that are too tight. Your baby also needs to strengthen muscles that are weak. You will be taught how to do exercises and activities with your baby at home. As your baby grows and develops, you will be taught new exercises and activities that will help your baby develop.






**Note:** It is important for you to lay your baby on their tummy several times a day while awake.

***Level One Exercises and Activities for Torticollis***

The following exercises need to be done every day. Do these exercises only under the direction of a physical therapist. Call our office with any questions or concerns.

	<p><b>Lateral flexion carrying position</b></p> <p>Hold your baby on their left side as your baby faces away from you. One of your arms will be between your baby's legs. Use your other hand to gently tilt the head to the right by moving your baby's ear towards the right shoulder. Make sure the left shoulder does not move when the head moves. Hold this stretch for up to _____ seconds. Repeat this stretch _____ times. You may be standing or sitting when you do this exercise.</p>
	<p><b>Supine neck stretch</b></p> <p>Place your child on their back over your lap with the head supported with your hand. Slowly lower your child's head, while holding their shoulders down. Use toys or a mirror for distraction.</p>
	<p><b>Tummy Time</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place your baby on their stomach. If needed, use a small blanket or towel roll to help prop your child onto their elbows.</li> <li>You can work on a ball, your lap, a boppy or your chest.</li> <li>You can also carry your baby horizontally with your arms supporting their chest.</li> </ol>

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	<p><b>Lateral trunk flexion</b></p> <p>With your baby lying on their back, gently curve your baby's trunk to the right so it makes a backwards "C" shape (opposite of picture shown). Hold the stretch for up to _____ seconds. Repeat _____ times.</p>
	<p><b>Supported sitting</b></p> <p>Use this position to help your baby learn to keep their head in a "midline" (center) position. As your baby sits, help your baby turn their head to the left and then tilt the head to the right. Encourage your baby to reach for toys and to reach for their feet while in this position.</p>
	<p><b>Tummy Time</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place your baby on their stomach. If needed, use a small blanket or towel roll to help prop your child onto their elbows.</li> <li>You can work on a ball, your lap, a boppy or your chest.</li> <li>You can also carry your baby horizontally with your arms supporting their chest.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Tummy carry</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry your baby so that your baby is facing away from you or is on his or her stomach.</li> <li>Encourage your baby to look up while in this position. This will help make neck and back muscles stronger. Encourage reaching forward with arms.</li> </ol>
	<p><b>Shoulder abduction</b></p> <p>With your baby lying on their back or in supported sitting, gently move the _____ arm up and out toward the head with the thumb side of the hand leading the movement. Your baby's arm should move far enough to touch their ear. <b>Do not force the movement.</b> Hold the stretch for _____ seconds.</p>

	<p><b>Environmental modifications</b></p> <p>Encourage your baby to look to the left by positioning the car seat or seat swing so that the activity in the room is to the left of your child.</p> <p>Have your child lay on their left side to play.</p> <p>When feeding your baby, position yourself and the baby to encourage head turning to the left.</p> <p>When holding your baby upright at your shoulder, hold them on the shoulder that makes your baby look to the left.</p> <p>When cradling your baby, you can work on positioning them with their hands and trunk in the middle.</p> <p>Use a front carrier to carry your baby.</p> <p>Limit the time spent in a bouncy chair or flat on their back while awake.</p>
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Illustrations courtesy: Therapy Skill Builders Inc. (3830 E Bellevue, PO Box 42050, Tucson AZ 85733) Visual Health Information (PO Box 44646, Tacoma WA 98444) VORT Corporation (PO Box 60132, Palo Alto, CA 94306)

***ALERT:*** Call your child's doctor or physical therapist if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.