

Prevent Flat Heads in Babies

If your baby sleeps with his/her head always in the same position, he or she can develop a flat head. The baby's skull is very soft and the bones can be affected by pressure if they constantly turn their head to the same side.

The good news is that baby flat head can be prevented. All you have to do is:

- Change your baby's position often throughout the day. Lots of supervised tummy time while your baby is awake will help promote healthy upper body strength.
- Place baby on their back with the baby's feet at the head of the crib one day, then the next day with the baby's feet at the foot of the crib. Babies prefer to look out into a room rather than at a wall.

Safe Sleeping

Although it is rare, all parents worry about the possibility of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is defined as the sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy baby in the first year of life. The cause of SIDS is unknown. We do know that the risk reaches a peak at 2-3 months of age, and that 95% of cases occur in the first 6 months.

How to reduce the risk of SIDS:

1. All babies from birth should be placed on their backs to sleep, even for naps. It is normal for babies to roll over and they should not be prevented from doing so. Continue to put baby to sleep on his back even if he changes his position during the night. Avoid using products developed to keep baby in a sleep position, such as foam wedges.
2. A crib should be uncluttered. A crib should have a firm mattress covered with a cotton sheet. Only light blankets should be used. Comforters, duvets or thick blankets should not be used.
3. Never use crib bumper pads or a pillow. These contribute to overheating, and can also suffocate your baby. For the same reason, you should never leave stuffed toys in baby's crib, or put your baby to sleep on top of a cushion or bean bag chair.
4. Babies should never sleep with a parent on a couch. Babies can become trapped between the back of the couch and their parent.
5. Babies should never sleep alone on an adult bed surrounded by pillows.
6. Prevent your baby from overheating. Keep baby's head uncovered while sleeping. A room temperature of around 18°C (65°F) is ideal. The best way to test if she is too hot is to feel her bare tummy or the nape of her neck. Babies like to be warm, not hot.
7. The safest place for your baby's crib is in the parent's bedroom for at least the first 6 months. If this is not possible, place the crib in the next room.
8. Continue breastfeeding. Babies who are breastfed have a lower risk of SIDS.
9. Don't smoke. Smoke in the baby's environment is a risk factor for SIDS.

