

# Cranial Remodeling Helmet

## Fitting Guidelines and Care Instructions



### Helmet Therapy

Your baby has been provided with a corrective helmet to help re-shape their head. It is important the helmet is cared for properly, and worn according to the recommendations from your orthotist to ensure positive results.

A remodelling helmet is used to gently correct uneven/flattened head shapes found in some infants. The uneven head shape develops when an infant's soft skull becomes flattened in one area, due to repeated pressure on that part of the head. It is more common in premature infants and in infants with tight neck muscles (torticollis). Womb position and preferred sleeping position are also common causes.

Helmet treatment is usually commenced at about 3 months of age, the infant must have adequate head and neck control to commence

helmet therapy to ensure they can reposition themselves. Treatment usually takes 3 to 6 months and is continued until a desirable outcome is achieved. If therapy is delayed, longer treatment time may be required. After 12 months of age helmet treatment is unlikely to be of benefit due to development of the skull.

### The Helmet

The helmets are made from hypo-allergenic foam in the inside, and a plastic outer shell. The helmet will change shape in heat, and must not be left in very hot places, such as the back of the car, or in front of a heater.

The helmet is made from a mould of your baby's head and is designed specifically for your baby. It applies a gentle hold over areas where growth is discouraged and is open over the flattened areas to encourage head growth.

### Applying the Helmet

1. Open the helmet by loosening the Velcro strap on the side
2. Place over the infant's head
3. Align the ears in the cut-out spaces and ensure the eyes are not obscured by the helmet
4. Once positioned firmly fasten the strap. To check the fit gently lift the helmet, if it displaces the helmet may not be fastened sufficiently.

## Suggested wear schedule

It is important to build up the time that the helmet is worn, continuing to check for skin irritations.

For example:

**Day 1: Half hour intervals throughout the day, not including sleep times**

**Day 2: One hour intervals, not including sleeps**

**Day 3: Two hour periods, try a day time sleep**

**Day 4: All day, including sleeps. Off at night.**

**Day 5: 23 hours**

Sometimes babies take longer to adjust to wearing a helmet, so it may take longer than 5 days to get to full time use. It is important that the helmet is eventually worn for the recommended 23 hours to achieve the best results.

## Taking care of your baby's skin

Check your baby's skin for any areas of excessive pressure. It is normal for red areas to appear on the high points of the head after removing the helmet. These should disappear within an hour. If the redness persists, and is causing skin damage, please contact the Orthotist. The helmet may need to be modified for a better fit. This is not uncommon as your baby's head grows.

Mild moisturiser can be used on the skin, as can a light dusting of baby powder (corn-starch based) to help absorb sweat.

## Cleaning the helmet

The helmet must be washed daily, in cool water with a mild soap. Antibacterial soap may be used. Pat the helmet dry carefully. Do not use a hairdryer, as the heat can warp the plastic. Wiping the inside helmet with alcohol rub can also help keep the helmet clean, and smelling fresh.

## Tips and Ideas

- Try to distract your baby when applying the helmet with play/toys
- Avoid taking the helmet off or placing it on when they are upset or crying. This can cause a negative association to develop
- Keep your baby cool, they can get very warm and sweaty under the helmet especially in the summer months. If this is an issue contact your orthotist for some tubular sweat bands
- If your baby is able to undo the helmet try taping the end of the Velcro strap down
- If your baby is able to pry the helmet off their head they will need an urgent review.

## Frequently Asked Questions



### Does my baby have to wear the helmet during tummy time?

**A:** Yes, the helmet acts by applying forces to the skull, encouraging growth in the flattened areas. It is important to wear the helmet even when the baby is not lying on their back. This also helps the baby adapt to wearing a helmet.

### Can I take the helmet off for special occasions, such as a wedding or family photo?

**A:** Yes, a short period without the helmet will not affect the overall result, however it is important that you return to the normal schedule as soon as you can.

## **My baby's head shape has improved so quickly! Can I take the helmet off now?**

**A:** It is important to have helmet removal approved by your Orthotist. If the helmet is removed too early, the head can go back to a flattened shape. The helmet removal will be done in stages, similar to when it was first fitted.

### **When to Get Help**

It is normal for your child to feel restricted in the helmet, however it should not be uncomfortable. Please contact us on the details below if you are concerned about any of the following:

- If you notice red areas on the flat parts of the head
- The helmet is causing sores or prolonged redness
- If your baby can remove their helmet or it is slipping out of position.

### **For outpatient appointments please contact:**

Prosthetic and Orthotic Services  
Kirwan Health Campus  
138 Thuringowa Drive  
Kirwan, QLD 4817

Phone: (07) 4433 2370

Fax: (07) 4433 9491



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