

Helmet Therapy for Plagiocephaly - Frequently Asked Questions

Plagiocephaly is cosmetic, and your baby's head shape should improve slowly with help from your physiotherapist. If you are concerned about your baby's head shape or it has not improved with positioning and exercises, helmet therapy may be suggested. A referral will be sent to STAR clinic where your baby's head shape will be assessed.

How does the helmet work and will it hurt my baby?



- The helmet is a passive device. It touches the rounded areas of the skull, and has a space over the areas that are flattened to help the head to grow into those areas and round out. It is not meant to apply pressure to your baby's head, however this requires consistent follow-up as your baby grows to make sure the helmet is fitting correctly.

How do we know if our baby needs a helmet?

- The team at STAR clinic will assess your baby's head to decide if a helmet could help.

How long will my baby have to wear the helmet?

- Most babies wear the helmet for 3-4 months. It may be shorter or longer than that depending on your baby's head shape, changes made by the helmet, and how your baby is growing. The results from your baby's STARscan will also be used to decide when your baby can stop wearing the helmet.

How long is the helmet worn each day?

- 23 hours. At first it is worn for only a few hours. The amount of time your baby wears it each day is slowly increased, so that they get used to wearing it. Your orthotist (the person who makes the helmet) will teach you about this when you get your helmet. It is important that you follow these recommendations.

How much does the helmet cost?

- The cost is usually covered by Manitoba Health when prescribed by a doctor.

What are the risks?

- There are very few risks with helmet therapy. You will have to check regularly to make sure the helmet fits properly and isn't bothering your baby's skin. Your orthotist will explain this to you at the helmet fitting appointment.

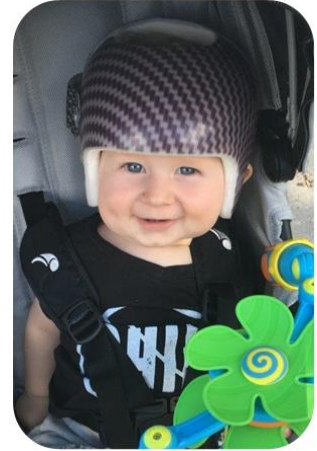
Helmet Therapy for Plagiocephaly - Frequently Asked Questions

Will the helmet fix my baby's torticollis (tight or weak neck muscle)?

- No. Torticollis and plagiocephaly are two different things, even though they often happen at the same time. You will need to do the exercises from your physiotherapist to help with the torticollis, because the helmet does not change how the neck moves.

What is STAR clinic?

- Babies with plagiocephaly may be referred to this clinic if their physiotherapist or doctor thinks that a helmet may help their head shape. It is at the Children's Hospital (840 Sherbrook St).



Why is it called STAR clinic?

- The device used to measure each baby's skull is called a STARscanner. The STAR clinic is named after that.

How does the STARscanner work?

- The orthotist and nurse will scan your baby's head by taking pictures with a computer while they wear a bonnet. There is no radiation used. The scan gives exact measurements, which are used to make the helmet and check on improvements.

Who will my baby see at STAR clinic?

- Your baby may be assessed by a physiotherapist, nurse, doctor and orthotist.

After the STAR clinic appointment, how long do we wait to get the helmet?

- If it is decided by the doctor that your baby would benefit from wearing a helmet, the orthotist will order it. It may take up to 2 weeks to be made.

Will there be a lot of appointments?

- If your baby gets a helmet, you will have an appointment at Snider Orthotics (50 Stafford St - (204)-927-1610) with an orthotist to make sure it fits properly. Your STAR clinic appointments and scans are every 6-8 weeks. Follow-up/adjustment appointments with your orthotist are every 3-4 weeks or as necessary. In the first 10-14 days, your appointments with the orthotist may be more frequent.

