

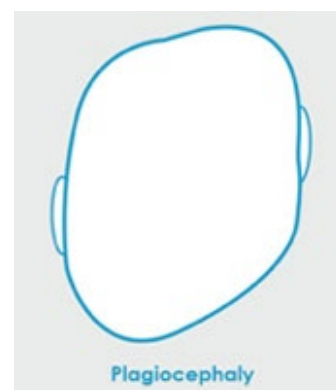


Plagiocephaly (flattened head)

This leaflet answers some of the questions that you may have about plagiocephaly and its treatment. You will also have the opportunity to discuss further concerns with us in clinic.

What is plagiocephaly and what is the cause?

Plagiocephaly is a common condition, which presents with flattening of the back or sides of a baby's head. The skull is made from multiple bones, which are soft at birth. Their shape can be affected by pressure from outside. This pressure can be from inside the womb if things are a bit squashed, or from the position of the head while sleeping after birth.



How is the condition diagnosed?

Plagiocephaly is usually diagnosed from a physical examination. Additional tests such as X-rays or a scan are not usually required.

*Image courtesy of
Technology in Motion*

What is the effect of this condition?

Despite the shape of the skull bones, there is no additional pressure on the brain. Therefore the child experiences no symptoms and suffers no negative effects on their learning or development. Some children can have associated stiffness in their neck muscles and a head that is turned to the side.

What is the natural progression of this condition?

As a child grows, their bones go through different stages of development. The vast majority of children grow out of this condition as the bones mature. The skull bones harden and join together with age taking a normal more rounded shape.

How can it be treated?

In the vast majority of cases no specific treatment is required as the skull bones remould as the baby's head develops. However, there are simple physiotherapy exercises and general advice that can help speed up this natural process. These will depend on your child's individual condition and will be discussed with you in clinic.

Further information

NHS Website at www.nhs.uk/conditions/plagiocephaly

National Childbirth Trust www.nct.org.uk/parenting/what-flat-head-syndrome-plagiocephaly-or-brachycephaly

Contact us

If you require any further advice please contact: Nina Doherty, Clinical Nurse Specialist 0118 322 8746 or 0118 322 5111, bleep 232.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

J Webb, N Doherty and N Davies, RBFT Paediatric Unit, February 2025

Next review due: February 2027