



Cranial Orthosis

Whether your baby needs some extra tummy time, repositioning or a cranial remolding orthosis, we will find the most appropriate treatment path.



Our practitioners specialize in the orthotic treatment of cranial asymmetries. Treatment may include parental education on infant repositioning techniques, and/or a cranial remolding orthosis.

We work closely with area craniofacial surgeons, neurologists, neurosurgeons and physiatrists to determine the best plan of care for each baby.

It's not uncommon for babies to be born with an asymmetric head shape.

No child has a perfectly symmetrical head but there are ranges of normal development used as a guide to diagnose for cranial asymmetries.

You or your child's physician may have identified some asymmetry or flattening in your child's head shape. We understand this can be alarming but do not worry as it is completely treatable. There are many classifications of head shapes, the most common type is plagiocephaly, sometimes called "flat head syndrome." These conditions can be effectively managed through non-invasive treatment methods.

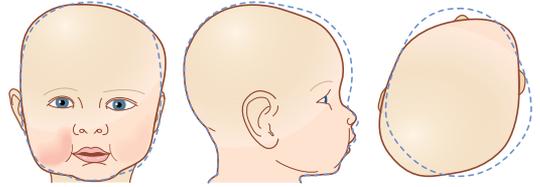
Our practitioners will work with your child's physician to determine the level of severity and the most appropriate treatment path.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF CRANIAL ASYMMETRY

Combinations of these head shapes are also seen.

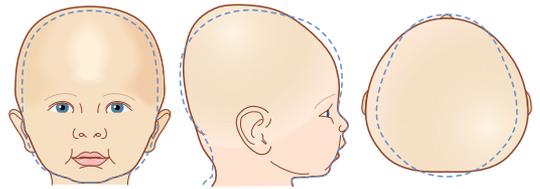
PLAGIOCEPHALY / COMMON SIGNS

- › Flattening on the back of the head
- › One side of the forehead is more prominent
- › One eye slightly smaller than the other
- › One ear shifted forward compared to the other
- › Facial asymmetry: one cheek fuller than the other



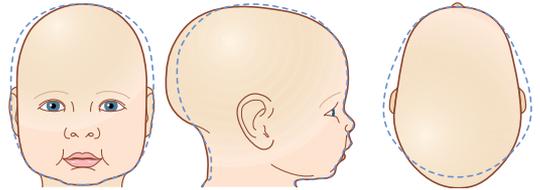
BRACHYCEPHALY / COMMON SIGNS

- › Flattening across the back of the head
- › From a side view, the head looks tall
- › The head appears wide at ear level
- › When viewed from the top, the head is short and wide



SCAPHOCEPHALY / COMMON SIGNS

- › Fattening of both sides of the head
- › When viewed from the top, the head is narrow and long
- › Common in premature babies



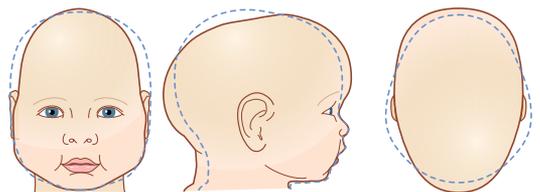
CRANIOSYNOSTOSIS

It is important for a medical professional to differentiate an irregular head shape due to cranial asymmetries from craniosynostosis. Craniosynostosis is a condition where there is premature fusion of the cranial bones that usually requires surgical intervention.

A diagnosis of craniosynostosis is a contra-indication for a cranial remolding orthosis, except post-operatively.

SAGITTAL CRANIOSYNOSTOSIS / COMMON SIGNS

- › Missing, full, or bulging "soft spot" (fontanel)
- › Bony ridges along the affected sutures
- › Facial abnormalities: flattened forehead and brow on one side, or pointed forehead





TREATMENT METHODS

REPOSITIONING TECHNIQUES

Repositioning involves changing the position of your baby's head while he or she is sleeping and during activities while your baby is awake. Repositioning keeps your baby from always resting on the same area, allowing for a more even distribution of your baby's head weight and helping to prevent flat spots. This technique is suggested for babies younger than four months.

A cranial remolding orthosis is recommended for infants who do not show improvement with consistent repositioning efforts.

CRANIAL REMOLDING ORTHOSIS

The cranial orthosis is a custom fabricated helmet specific for each baby. It consists of a rigid thermoplastic outer shell often with a soft liner. The liner allows for gradual adjustments to guide growth and promote symmetry of the skull.

Treatment lasts an average of 16 weeks and the cranial orthosis is worn 23 hours a day. The cranial orthosis may be indicated for babies between 4 to 18 months of age. Best results are achieved when treatment is initiated with a baby between four and seven months of age. We use the STARscanner™ system.

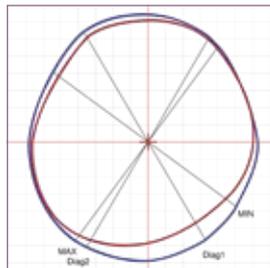


STARscanner™ SYSTEM

The STARscanner™ system provides parents and the referring physician with an objective assessment of a baby's head shape. It uses an eye-safe laser to digitally scan a baby's head in fewer than two seconds. After the scan is obtained, a report is generated containing the precise measurements needed to quantify the cranial asymmetry.

The STARscanner™ allows us to create a mold of the baby's head without using a plaster cast. Once the scan is acquired, CAD/CAM technology is used to convert the image into a three-dimensional model of the baby's head. This model then is used for fabrication of the cranial orthosis.

Early intervention is key in the success of managing head shape conditions. Our STARband™ and STARlight™ cranial orthoses are FDA approved for the management of positional plagiocephaly. The STARlight™ is also the first FDA approved post-operative cranial remolding orthosis used for Craniosynostosis.





THE PROCESS

① INITIAL EVALUATION

A thorough evaluation of an infant's head shape is completed during the first visit at Westcoast Brace & Limb. After obtaining the baby's history from his or her parents or care givers, measurements are taken. The baby's head is then scanned and a series of six clinical photographs are taken. These photographs are repeated at the end of the treatment for comparison.



② FITTING & DELIVERY

Parents or care givers return with their baby after about ten days for delivery of the orthosis. During this visit, time is spent optimizing the fit of the orthosis and providing thorough wear/ care instructions and answering any questions that arise.





③ FOLLOW-UP VISITS

When choosing to proceed with treatment, it is important to consider that follow-up visits are essential to treatment success. Visits are scheduled weekly or bi-weekly, depending on the baby's age and growth rate.

Measurements are taken at every follow-up visit. These measurements help monitor head growth and document progress. Modifications to the cranial orthosis are made to accommodate the changes that are occurring and to ensure that there is always space for growth in the desired areas.



④ FINAL VISIT

Once it is determined that the desired correction of the head shape has been achieved, parents or care givers return with their baby for a final visit. On that day, new clinical photographs are taken and the baby's head is scanned again. The parents receive a copy of the pre- and post-treatment photographs and scan reports.

Your little one will also receive a Westcoast Kids Graduation Certificate to celebrate being helmet free.



DECIDING WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOUR BABY

CONTACT US TODAY
TO SCHEDULE A
FREE EVALUATION.

Here at Westcoast Brace & Limb, our focus is to provide you the information you need to make an informed decision about what's right for your baby. Our knowledgeable practitioners are available to you for a free evaluation. You'll leave with a better understanding of your baby's head shape and the most appropriate treatment path.

TREATMENT OUTCOMES

DURATION: 4 MONTHS



AGE: 3.5 MOS

AGE: 7.5 MOS

DURATION: 5 MONTHS



AGE: 7 MOS

AGE: 12 MOS

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My husband and I started noticing our daughter Gwyneth developing a flat spot on her head when she was 3 months old. When she went in for her 4 month well visit her doctor sent us to a specialist, where we were told that Gwyneth had plagiocephaly and that we should try repositioning her during sleep for a month. With no success on repositioning we were then referred to Westcoast Brace and Limb. The orthotist measured and scanned our daughter's head and talked to us about a cranial orthosis. Initially my husband and I were worried about putting our baby in a helmet, but after doing extensive research and speaking with the staff at Westcoast Brace & Limb, the decision was much easier to make. Her head looks wonderful now!



—Katie Metz, Mother

DURATION: 4 MONTHS



AGE: 5 MOS

AGE: 9 MOS

DURATION: 5.5 MONTHS



AGE: 7 MOS

AGE: 12.5 MOS

FAQS

What is the best age to start treatment?

The rapid cranial growth experienced by infants between four and seven months of age makes them excellent candidates for orthotic treatment.

Will a plaster cast of the baby's head have to be taken for fabrication of the cranial orthosis?

No. We use the STARscanner™ to obtain precise dimensions of a baby's head in order to fabricate the cranial orthosis.

How long will it take for a cranial orthosis to be made?

The baby will receive his/her cranial orthosis 10 days after the scan.

For how long will a baby need to wear the cranial orthosis?

This will depend on the age of the infant and the severity of the cranial asymmetry. On average, treatment lasts between four to six months.

Is a prescription required for a cranial orthosis?

Yes. A prescription from either a pediatrician or a specialist is needed before treatment can be initiated.

Will the baby need more than one cranial orthosis during treatment?

No. It is unlikely that an infant will outgrow their cranial orthosis before treatment completion if there is proper compliance with the wearing schedule.

How many follow-up visits are needed during treatment?

This will depend on how long the infant will need to wear the cranial orthosis. The average treatment time is between four to six months and follow-up visits are done weekly or bi-weekly, depending on the baby's age.

Why are frequent follow-up visits needed?

Follow-up visits are needed to maintain optimal fit of the cranial orthosis as the head grows.

My baby just received a cranial orthosis. Why is he/she perspiring excessively and what can I do about it?

When the baby first begins to wear the cranial orthosis, perspiration levels increase dramatically for the first five days. This will change once he/she has been wearing the cranial orthosis full time and his/her body has a chance to acclimate to it. You can help relieve any discomfort by dressing your baby in light clothing and keeping him/her in a cool environment. Also, when you notice that your baby's head is wet, you may remove the cranial orthosis, dry its inside surface and your baby's head with a clean washcloth, and immediately re-apply the orthosis.

I noticed a significant red spot on my baby's head upon removing the cranial orthosis. What should I do?

Keep the cranial orthosis off and contact your orthotist immediately if:

- › Redness persists for more than an hour
- › You notice that there is swelling
- › A rash is present
- › Skin integrity is affected

Will my insurance cover the cranial orthosis?

This will depend on your specific policy. Please contact our office and speak with our orthotic case manager, who will be able to verify your benefits.

INSURANCE

When parents call Westcoast Brace & Limb to schedule an evaluation, they will also speak with a dedicated Orthotic Case Manager.

Our Case Managers have been with Westcoast Brace & Limb for many years, and possesses a wealth of knowledge relating to insurance criteria for coverage of the cranial remolding orthosis. They will verify insurance benefits and obtain authorization when necessary.

WESTCOAST kids

If your baby has moderate to severe cranial asymmetry and your healthcare professional determines your baby requires a cranial orthosis—**WCBL can help.**



CONTACT US TODAY
TO SCHEDULE A
FREE EVALUATION.

WCBL

Restoring bodies. Rebuilding lives.

CONTACT US (813) 985-5000
Open 8:30am – 5:00pm
Monday - Friday

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