

# What is Torticollis?

Infant Torticollis is a tightening of muscles on one side of the neck, particularly the Sternocleidomastoid (SCM) muscle.

A customized treatment approach by a pediatric physical therapist is often the most beneficial form of treatment for a child who has torticollis.

## Signs and Symptoms:

- Tilting of the head to one side
- Turning of the head to only one direction
- Changes in head shape, flattening, asymmetry
- Difficulty breastfeeding on one side

## Treatment at home:

- Encourage turning of the head to both directions during play and when feeding
- Limit the amount of time your baby spends in car seats, bouncy seats, infant swings
- Practice tummy time while baby is awake and supervised
- Alternate the end of the crib and the changing table in which you place your baby's head
- Don't always use the same hip and arm to carry your baby
- Encourage your baby to roll to both the right and left side

The following set of stretches is for a tight muscle on the right side of your baby's neck. When performing the stretches, place the baby on his or her back. Perform the stretches to the opposite side when your baby has a tight muscle on the left side of the neck. It is recommended to perform stretches to both sides.

**1. SIDEBEND STRETCH-** Hold the baby's right shoulder down and cradle the head with your right hand. Gently sidebend the head to the baby's left side (ear to shoulder). Hold the position for 5-10 seconds X 3 reps. Perform at each diaper change.



**2. ROTATION STRETCH-** Hold the baby's left shoulder down and gently turn the baby's head toward the right shoulder (chin to shoulder). Hold the position for 5-10 seconds X 3 reps. Perform at each diaper change.



**Note:** This information is designed for general guidelines only. Your physician may modify these guidelines for your child. If you have specific questions about these instructions or concerns regarding your child's care, contact your physician.