

CranioSacral Therapy for Plagiocephaly:

Why CST Is the Logical Choice for Resolving Misshapen Heads

By Rebecca Flowers, O.T.R., B.C.P., CST-D

The incidence of infant plagiocephaly, or misshapen heads, is on the rise in the United States. Any number of possible causes may be cited: babies consistently placed on their backs to sleep; increased medical intervention in the birth process in the form of optional C-sections; epidural and Pitocin use. Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that more cases than ever are being recorded of misshapen heads in the infant population. This is where CranioSacral Therapy can intervene to restore symmetry and facilitate health and healing.

CranioSacral Therapy (CST) gently and noninvasively works to release abnormal tensions deep within the head, spine and body. This action makes it a very effective approach for plagiocephaly and torticollis (a twist in the neck), which often accompanies plagiocephaly.

Too often plagiocephaly is viewed from its outward manifestations alone—flat skulls, uneven ears and eyes. The potential over time, however, is for more severe problems to arise, including headaches, scoliosis, visual disorders, sensorimotor and sensory processing dysfunction, and TMJ problems, to name a few.

Fortunately, more practitioners are being educated on the seriousness and scope of the condition. The primary method recommended to correct it, however, is still the helmet or "DOC band." The outcome of this blanket approach is that the infant's head shape is changed outwardly, while the internal underlying causes of the problem are left uncorrected or, worse, new internal problems are induced.

To understand this consequence we must look at the relationship between bone and soft tissue. In essence, bones are at the mercy of soft tissue. They move and mold in whatever direction they are pulled. Soft tissue consists of the muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue. Included in connective tissue are the lining of the skull (meninges), intracranial membranes, and membrane sack that houses the spinal cord (dural tube). When there is tension in the connective tissue, the result can be a twist in the neck (torticollis) and or a misshaping of the skull. CST works to remove and unwind these tensions.

In many instances, the use of CranioSacral Therapy on infants with plagiocephaly results in better-proportioned head shape. Perhaps more significantly, CST helps to bolster the functioning of their underlying systems—with results that include greatly improved feeding, sleeping, and sensory and neuromotor development.

It is shown that the earlier the intervention with CranioSacral Therapy, the more rapid the outcomes. This shouldn't deter you, however, from using the technique on older clients. I have seen the head shape and facial features of a 60-year-old woman change in less than six CST sessions!

The lesson is, it's never too late to make a difference in a client's life. CranioSacral Therapy is a safe and proven method of effectively reversing the effects of plagiocephaly at any age.

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