

## day-to-day care



- 1 Vary the carrying position. Alternate your arms or shoulders
- 2 Alternate the arm you use to nurse baby when feeding
- 3 Avoid laying baby on their back in car seats, bouncers or swings for prolonged periods of time (not more than 4 hours/day). Ensure baby's head is not always turning to the same side.



## sleep time

- 1 Alternate baby's head position when you put your baby to sleep
- 2 Put baby to sleep at alternate ends of the cot or change the position of the cot in the room

Do not put baby to sleep in the side position to prevent a flattened spot on the head.



**Back** to Sleep  
**Tummy** to Play  
**Sit up** to watch the world

If you have any concerns see your doctor or a child health nurse at your local Community Health Centre.



How to prevent

# FLATTENED HEAD SHAPE

in newborn babies



Flattened



Symmetrical

This leaflet suggests ways to prevent a flat spot on the head. These strategies are simple and easy to apply in the day-to-day care of your baby.

## Most common cause of a flattened head shape

The skull of a newborn baby is very soft. Any constant pressure on the same spot of the head may cause a flattened area. The position in which the baby sleeps and plays can influence the shape of the head. Sometimes facial features may also become unequal.

### Key strategies

- Put baby to sleep on his/her back (supine position) to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Avoid continual pressure on one spot of the baby's head
- Start as early as possible from birth
- Be consistent and persistent



## play time

It is important to vary your baby's play positions when your baby is awake and supervised. This enables your baby to strengthen their muscles for movement.

### 1 Supervised tummy time

Start with baby on your chest or lying over a rolled nappy (remove rolls for sleeping). Position the baby's arms slightly forward and prop on the elbows. In this way, it is easier for the baby to raise his/her head. Do this 3-4 times each day and gradually build up the time, eg try for a few minutes each nappy change.

*(For more information please refer to the brochure 'Tummy Playtime').*



### 2 Place baby on alternate sides during playtime

Regularly change the position of toys that your baby likes to look at. Encourage baby to turn his/her head to either side when you talk or play with him/her.



**If the baby cries or becomes distressed:**

- try for a shorter time but more often
- distract the baby's attention by talking to baby and using toy.

# Keep persisting!