



Orthotic & Prosthetic Lab, Inc.  
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## **Caregiver's Instructions for Cranial Remolding Helmets**

### **Applying the Helmet**

When you receive the helmet, the orthotist will show you how to place the helmet on the child's head. Be sure that both the helmet and your child's head are dry. Undo the Velcro→ strap; expand the helmet slightly by pulling it apart and placing it on the child's head. Wiggle the helmet slightly so it will seat itself in the appropriate orientation (usually the center of the helmet's forehead curve is above the nose). Run the Velcro through the attached metal loop and pull the helmet closed till the edges just meet. Do not over tighten or this may cause excessive pressure and redness to occur. The front half will overlap the rear part of the helmet. Initially, the helmet may feel loose due to the sizing to accommodate skull growth.

### **Wearing Schedule**

We suggest that at the beginning of the first week, day 1 and 2, the child wear the helmet when the child is happy, rested, and playing with toys, or when the child is on an outing. Day 3 and 4 the child will begin napping in the helmet.

#### **Day 1**

If possible, have the child wear the helmet on 3 separate occasions. The helmet should be worn each time for 1 hour only. When you take the helmet off, check the skin for any signs of redness that do not disappear in 30 minutes.

#### **Day 2**

Have your child wear the helmet 3 times a day, but for 2 hours each time. When you take the helmet off, check the skin for any signs of redness that do not disappear in 30 minutes.

#### **Day 3**

Have your child wear the helmet 3 times a day but for 3 hours each time. When you take the helmet off, check the skin for any signs of redness that do not disappear in 30 minutes.

#### **Full time use**

Have your child wear the helmet 4 hours 3 times a day. If all goes well, have the child sleep overnight in the helmet, meeting the goal of approximately 22 hrs of use. The child should continue to wear the helmet every day for 22 hrs a day. Check for redness at each removal.

### **Skin Checks**

Check your child's head regularly throughout the day for any redness that may indicate excessive pressure. It is not unusual for some minor redness to occur as a result of wearing a helmet. This redness, which is normal and not a cause for concern, disappears within 30 minutes. However, if the redness remains for 30 minutes or more, discontinue helmet use and call the office for an appointment as soon as possible to adjust the helmet.

Sleep marks may last a bit longer. If you see a red mark after the child wakes, check to see if the helmet is tight there. If the helmet is not tight in this area of redness, it is most likely a sleep mark. As long as the mark disappears and does not return, it is a sleep mark and not a cause for concern.

If any skin breakdown occurs, discontinue use and call the office for an immediate appointment.

### **Hygiene**

It is necessary to wash both the inside of the helmet and your child's head daily. This will eliminate any odors from sweating and reduce the risk of rashes.

Clean the inside of the helmet with lukewarm water and whatever soap the child tolerates. Be sure to rinse thoroughly and allow the helmet to dry before wearing. If desired, you may also use rubbing alcohol to clean the inside of the helmet. Use a washcloth to clean and rinse the helmet. Avoid the use of powders or deodorants as these can cause rashes.

### **Heat Issues**

Helmets hold in body heat just like any other hat. It is best to keep the child cool to avoid heat issues. If the child's hands are warm, they are warm enough.

Dress the child a layer lighter than usual during both the day and night.

Car seats trap the heat. If your car has good air conditioning, check to be sure vented air reaches the child. In the winter, pull the blankets or the cover back a bit.

If your child has a fever over 101.5, remove the helmet till the fever breaks.

Utilize sun screen, toddler size hats or stroller visors to prevent sunburn.

When the temperatures soar to 90+ degrees, the child may be outside in the helmet for 15 minutes. After this time, remove the helmet or get inside to the air conditioning.

Here in St Louis, with the hot humid summer, we aim to keep usage at or above the 20 hours a day.

### **Rashes**

Your child may develop a rash while wearing the cranial remolding helmet. Rashes can be caused by different things such as heat, a fungus, a virus or bacteria, or by allergies. Some rashes need special treatment. The best way to avoid rashes is a few short breaks throughout the

day. Remove the helmet every 3-4 hours during the day when the child is awake. Wipe the child's head with a cool wet washcloth, water only, and wipe out any sweat inside the helmet. Place the helmet back on the child's head when everything is dry. These breaks are 10-15 minutes and many families do them at mealtimes.

If your child has eczema, or develops a rash, apply any physician recommended creams. Allow the cream to be absorbed into the skin, and then put on the helmet. Wearing instructions are the same as above.

### **Decoration**

The helmet may be decorated with stickers or paints, but only the outside. The helmet is available in different colors and patterns, which must be selected at the time of casting.

### **Follow-up Appointments**

Frequent follow-ups are required to check the fit of the helmet and to observe the child's progress.

After fitting the helmet, we will schedule a one-week follow-up appointment in one of our offices. At that time, we can address any problems that are preventing full time use and any problems with the fit of the helmet.

Later appointments are at one-month intervals or more frequently if needed. We see infants 3 to 5 months of age more frequently because of their rapid skull and brain growth.

### **Duration of Helmet Use**

Children usually wear the helmet for 3 to 6 months. Most children discontinue helmet use by 12 to 15 months of age. If a child outgrows a helmet, the physician, orthotist, and the family will evaluate the child's progress and decide if a second helmet is necessary. Most children require only one helmet.

### **Torticollis**

Torticollis occurs when the muscles in the neck are in a contracted state, producing an unnatural position of the head and a decrease in the range of motion of the neck muscles. If your baby has torticollis, the child will need to be evaluated by a physician and/or physical therapist. Continue to preform any exercises or stretches even after the child receives a helmet. These exercises will reduce the tightness in the neck muscles while the helmet is reshaping the head.

### **Questions**

Your commitment to the use of the orthotic molding helmet is very important to treating your child successfully. If you have any questions or concerns now or when at home, please feel free to contact us:

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**It is important to follow instructions and to keep you regularly scheduled appointment to ensure a positive outcome and to prevent skin irritation.**

