



Congenital torticollis in children

What is congenital torticollis?

An infant that keeps his or her head tilted or turned to one side may have a condition called congenital torticollis.

"Congenital" means the condition is present at birth. "Torticollis" means twisted or bent neck.

*Historically this condition has also been called "Wry Neck."

Because the child's neck range of motion is limited, he or she may keep the head positioned to one side.

Symptoms may include:

- head tilting to one side
- limited neck range of motion
- one side of the face or skull flattened
- lump or swelling in the muscle of the neck.

What causes torticollis?

No one knows exactly what causes this condition. Congenital torticollis typically is a result of the shortening of a muscle in the neck.

If the tightened or shortened muscle is not stretched, it may result in permanent limited neck range of motion and or flattening of the head and face structures.

What Courage Kenny Kids therapists can do

Courage Kenny Kids pediatric physical therapists will evaluate your child by looking at his or her neck range of motion, neck and body strength, and motor skills. After determining which muscles are affected, you will be instructed in a home exercise program.

This program will include gentle stretches, positioning techniques, and strengthening exercises and activities. Your therapist will give you helpful ideas for carrying and holding your child, and tips on how to use or modify your child's environment to aid in stretching and strengthening his or her muscles.

The therapist may also recommend physical therapy services to stretch and strengthen your child's neck muscles and direct your child's home program routine.

Congenital torticollis in children (continued)

What you can do at home

Position your child in his/her crib so they must turn toward their less preferred side to look out into the environment. You can also place toys and other stimulating objects in positions where the child must turn his or her head to the less preferred side to see them. Feeding time is another good time to promote turning to the less preferred side. All of these activities promote active use of the affected neck muscles and encourages stretching of the tight muscles.

Source: Courage Kenny Kids

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