

DANKMEYER

PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

Caregiver Instructions for Cranial Molding Helmets

Break-in Schedule

Day 1: 1-2 hours on while awake, with ½ - 1 hour breaks in between; no use during naps or overnight.

Day 2: 2-3 hours on while awake, with a ½ hour off in between; no use during naps or overnight.

Day 3: 3-4 hours on with a ½ hour break in between; use during naps, but not overnight.

Day 4: Begin full time schedule. Infant's head should be checked every 3-4 hours with a ½ hour break IF NEEDED during the day. Breaks do not need to occur overnight.

Cranial Orthoses are worn for 23 hours per day. Off time is used for bathing and hygiene. Aside from the generalized data regarding circumferential ranges for boys and girls, there is no way to determine in advance *exactly* when the head is growing. Having a full-time schedule captures the redirection of growth to the fullest during the treatment period. In cases when the orthosis (helmet) is only worn at night, little to no improvement has been noted after one month. If the helmet is not consistently worn 23 hours a day, extensive adjustments are needed to regain appropriate fit and overall time for use of the helmet is increased. DO NOT discontinue the wearing schedule without talking to your Doctor and Orthotist.

Wearing Instructions

To put the helmet on the baby's head, undo the Velcro straps, the helmet opens up from the bottom and slips onto the baby's head. Then attach the Velcro straps securely around the back of the helmet.

When the helmet is removed, you should check for any problems such as red areas that remain for more than ½ hour. This indicates that there could be pressure in a given spot and that the helmet may need to be adjusted. Contact your Orthotist immediately.

If any skin breakdown (chaffing, peeling, bleeding, etc.) is noted, remove the helmet and call your Orthotist immediately.

MAIN OFFICE: 1-800-879-1245

CUMBERLAND OFFICE: 301-777-7086 • EASTON OFFICE: 410-822-7599 • SINAI OFFICE: 410-5542-6500

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The baby will perspire in the helmet, especially during warm weather. This is usually not a problem and most babies tolerate it well. If a heat rash develops, consult your family doctor for his/her recommendations.

If your infant has a fever, the helmet should be removed and kept off until the fever breaks. Once the fever breaks, return to a full time wearing schedule.

Time is the key to this whole process. After the initial fitting, your infant will be scheduled for a 1-2 week follow up appointment. This has given your infant a chance to break in the helmet and any adjustments that are needed can be made. This also gives you, the parents, a chance to discuss any questions you may have after experiencing use of the helmet. Typically, after the first follow-up appointment, infants under 8 months of age are followed every 2-4 weeks and infants 8 months of age and older are followed every 3-4 weeks. Infants with other underlying diagnoses and/or any fitting issues may be seen more often.

Sleeping is the most important time for your baby to wear the helmet because of the reshaping from the pressure of gravity. Your infant no longer has a flat place to lie on due to the helmet. That alone helps to remodel the bone plates.

As the baby's skull starts to remodel, you may notice that the helmet seems to be bigger—the baby is able to pull it off or it shifts in the bed at night. Some of that is to be expected, but if it becomes an ongoing problem, please call your Orthotist. Every baby is different and requires individual evaluation.

If positional plagiocephaly is associated with torticollis, there may be some additional types of therapy needed as well. If the child is recommended for physical therapy or home neck exercises and a stretching program by your doctor, remove the helmet during therapy and replace it soon after these exercises.

Cleaning and Care of the Helmet

The helmet should be cleaned whenever you give your child a bath. Clean the helmet first so that it has time to dry while you are bathing and dressing your baby. The helmet should be cleaned with the same baby shampoo that you use to wash your baby's hair. Use a washcloth

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to clean the inside of the helmet. DO NOT submerge the helmet in water. Use a towel to dry the inside and outside of the helmet. DO NOT place the helmet in front of a heat vent, lay it in the sun or use a hair dryer to dry it - any of these situations may alter the shape of the helmet. Be sure the helmet is **completely dry** before putting it back on your infant's head. Never put a wet or damp helmet on the baby's head.

Inspect the helmet prior to putting it on the baby. Check to be sure that the structural integrity (strapping is attached, both adjustment screws are in place) is good. There are two adjustment screws that the Orthotist uses for size adjustment. These should not be removed. In the unlikely event that they do become loose or fall out, the Orthotist will reinstall them.

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