

## Resolving Misshapen Heads with Help from CranioSacral Therapy

by Rebecca Flowers, OTR, BCI, CST-D

By all appearances, the incidence of infant plagiocephaly or "misshapen heads" is on the rise in the United States. The causes vary: babies who are consistently placed on their backs to sleep, increased medical intervention in the birth process in the form of optional c-sections, even epidural and Pitocin use. Whatever the reasons, more cases than ever are being recorded of misshapen infant heads.

The good news is, CranioSacral Therapy (CST) has been shown to help restore symmetry and facilitate health and healing in many of these cases. CST gently and noninvasively releases abnormal tensions deep within the head, spine and body. This process makes is very effective at normalizing plagiocephaly and the torticollis (twist in the neck) that often accompanies it.

Too often plagiocephaly is viewed from its outward manifestations alone – flat skulls and uneven ears and eyes. Yet there is potential over time for more severe problems to arise, including headaches, scoliosis, visual disorders, TMJ problems, and sensorimotor- and sensory-processing dysfunction.

Fortunately, more practitioners are being educated on the seriousness and scope of the condition. The problem is the primary recommended correction is still the "DOCband" helmet. This blanket approach can cause an infant's head shape to change outwardly while the internal underlying causes of the problem are left uncorrected. Or worse, the approach could induce new internal problems.

### IT'S ALL A MATTER OF THE TISSUE-BONE RELATIONSHIP

To better understand the consequence of leaving the underlying causes of plagiocephaly uncorrected, let's examine the relationship between bone and soft tissue. Soft tissue consists of the muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue, which include the lining of the skull (meninges), intracranial membranes, and the membrane sac that houses the spinal cord (dural tube).

Essentially, the bones are at the mercy of the soft tissue. They move and mold in whatever direction they are pulled. That's why tension in the connective tissue can so easily result in a twist in the neck (torticollis) and/or a misshapen skull. CST works to effectively 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 importantly, CST helps bolster the performance of their underlying systems. Results include greatly improved feeding, sleeping, and sensory and neuromotor development.

From my experience, the earlier the intervention with CranioSacral Therapy, the more rapid the outcomes. Yet this shouldn't deter you from using this approach on older clients. I've seen the head shape and facial features of a 60-year old woman change in less than six CST sessions!

The lesson is this: 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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