

## CRANIAL MOLDING ORTHOSIS

Your child has been fit with a cranial molding helmet from Orthotic & Prosthetic Specialties, Inc. This orthosis is a specialized device, and its use requires specialized instructions. Your physician determines the medical need and wearing schedule for this orthosis, which in turn determine your individualized instructions. The following are general guidelines for wearing and caring for your child's helmet. Your doctor may alter or supersede any of them, and you should follow his/her directions carefully.

This is a custom device, which was made directly from the mold taken at your first appointment. The design of the helmet allows for expansion to accommodate growth that your child will experience while wearing the helmet. As a result, there is a fair amount of follow-up involved. We'd like to arrange helmet follow-up appointments every 3 to 6 weeks with your child, so that we may continually evaluate the fit and function of the orthosis. We are also available to make any adjustments needed to the helmet whenever they arise.

You should don (put on) and doff (take off) the helmet with your child in a seated or upright position, a high chair often works well. One person can also hold the child while the other fits the helmet. This enables the fitter to apply the helmet quickly and correctly. First loosen the Velcro straps on each side of the helmet, so that the halves can be opened easily. Place one hand on each side of the helmet, with your fingers located on the ear holes. Gently widen the helmet with your fingers and apply the helmet to your child's head. Release your fingers and the halves of the helmet will close gently around his/her head. Make sure that both halves of the helmet are now closed completely by gently pressing the halves together and checking that there is no space in the padding on the sides. Apply the straps to the Velcro to secure the helmet in its position. Once the helmet is in place, take note of the helmet's position. Make sure that your child's ears are clear of the helmet. There should be a slight margin of space around each ear.

The helmet is designed to fit your child's head closely. However, it is not uncommon to experience a slight amount of rotation (approximately 1 cm) when the child is placed in a car seat or crib. This can be adjusted by simply shifting the helmet. If more rotation is occurring or if the helmet does not stay in position, it may need an adjustment. Please contact us at that time and we'd be happy to schedule you for an appointment.

The ideal wearing schedule for this orthosis is 23 hours per day, since your child benefits from the helmet treatment the most when they have it on. However, this is to be achieved gradually over a period of a week or two. Once you first receive the helmet, try leaving it on for 1-2 hours at first, then remove it in order to check your child's skin for any red marks or irritation. If the area is unaffected, then reapply the helmet. Increase the time your child wears the helmet gradually until they are wearing it the desired length of time. It may take a few nights or naptimes for your child to get accustomed to the helmet, but they are usually sleeping through the night with it within the first 2 weeks. Try not to take the helmet on and off frequently, since this tends to increase the amount of time it takes for your child to get used to wearing the helmet.

Your child's helmet is easy to care for. Please feel free to decorate the outside with stickers, markers, etc. This will not hurt the function at all. Also note that a winter hat can also easily be worn over the top of the helmet. The helmet can be cleaned with a damp cloth, wiping inside and out. To deep clean the inside, we recommend rubbing alcohol, since it evaporates and does not leave a residue that may irritate the skin. There is no need to submerge the helmet in water in order to clean it. Once it has been cleaned, please allow enough time for the helmet to dry properly before reapplying it to your child's head. Many parents will clean it at the beginning of their child's bath, which gives plenty of time for the helmet to dry before reapplying. It is not recommended that you use powders or lotions inside of the helmet.

The helmet is custom molded to your child's head. It contacts those areas that are round and provides a void to support the flattened area and encourage growth and symmetry. Pink marks that are present immediately after the helmet is removed but disappear after 30-45 minutes are quite common. They are similar to what you might get from a watch or glasses. However, if there are areas that turn bright red in color and do not dissipate after 45 minutes, that is often a sign that the helmet needs an adjustment. Please contact our office, and we will schedule an appointment for an adjustment as soon as possible.

The use of a cranial molding orthosis is clearly beneficial in treating plagiocephaly. You should notice dramatic improvement in your child's head shape within the first few weeks of treatment. Please feel free to contact our office at (216) 531-2773 with any questions or concerns that you might have.