ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE A TORTICOLLIS

DEFINITION:
Torticollis is usually caused by a tightening of the neck muscle which side-flexes the head one way, and rotates it the opposite way. For example, you may notice your baby's left ear seems closer to his or her left shoulder (side flexed left). He or she strongly prefers to look to the right (rotated right). This would be defined as a torticollis.

In most instances, frequently encouraging the opposite movement pattern, will very positively correct a torticollis.

While you are waiting to see the physiotherapist who will instruct you in some passive stretching techniques to lengthen the tight muscle of your baby’s neck, you can immediately begin activities to improve the condition:

CHANGE YOUR BABY’S PLAY POSITION:
Throughout the day, it is important to vary your baby’s play positions, to discourage the tendency to always side flex the head one way and rotate the other way. Some suggestions to change baby’s position include:

a) Put your baby on his/her tummy several times a day on the floor or on another safe, firm surface. Placing a rolled towel under your baby’s chest, at the armpit area, will help give your baby support and will assist your baby to lift his/her head

b) Position your baby in side lying with a firm rolled towel behind the baby’s back while playing. Remember to alternate between right and left side lying.

c) When nursing or bottle feeding, use a pillow to support the baby, and encourage him/her to rotate the head to the side you are desiring.

d) If baby’s crib is against the wall, position the child in the crib so that he/she is encouraged to rotate their head in the desired direction, to see you when you enter the room.