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York Hospital therapist certified to treat torticollis

Approximately two in 100 babies have congenital muscular torticollis, a condition in which a neck muscle that stretches from the back of the ear down to the collar bone and sternum, is shortened, tightened or injured. York Hospital pediatric physical therapist Keri Stoorza was recently certified to treat this condition and is currently the only therapist in the area with this specialized certification.

“Torticollis is usually caused by positioning in the womb, resulting in asymmetrical posturing of the head and neck,” Keri explains. “Many of these babies can’t turn their heads from side to side.”

Torticollis left untreated can result in malformation of the head and developmental delays in crawling, sitting, walking and feeding. They have trouble with posture and balance. “Because these babies are looking at their environment from an asymmetrical view, they also have problems with visual skills,” Keri adds. “Fortunately, torticollis can usually be successfully treated with physical therapy. Babies can be treated as early as 6 weeks by doing stretching and positioning exercises and massage. Sometimes orthotics are used to help reshape the head as well.”

Parents are also encouraged to give their baby plenty of supervised time on their bellies, which helps develop their back, shoulders, arms and neck. Besides treating torticollis, Keri provides physical therapy services to children with various disabilities including: cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, spina bifida, developmental delays and coordination disorders. She is a member of York Hospital’s South Berwick Physical Therapy team, whose office can be found at the newly opened South Berwick Medical Services facility in South Berwick. For more information or to schedule an appointment with Keri, call 207 384-7260.

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