



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS

This guide provides important information about your baby's Serkel. Please read it carefully and contact us if you have any questions.

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INTRODUCTION

The Serkel is a Cranial Remodelling Helmet used to treat babies between 4 and 12 months of age for asymmetrical head shapes, such as positional plagiocephaly and brachycephaly.

The Serkel has been designed and developed in Melbourne by an international team of clinicians, designers, software engineers and parents.

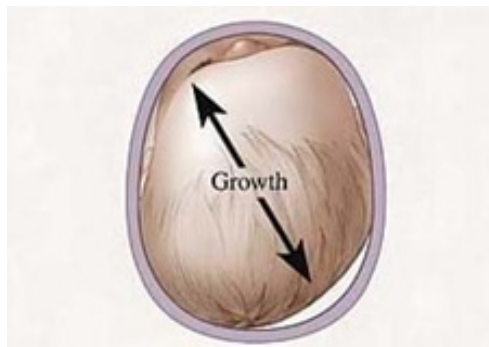
The Serkel is custom-made for your baby utilizing state-of-the-art 3D scanning, computer programming and 3D printing technology.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Serkel is a non-invasive treatment, and works by applying gentle pressure over the prominent areas of your baby's head, whilst leaving room in the helmet for the flat areas to grow.

Essentially, we are redirecting your baby's natural head growth to gently round your baby's head.





For optimal comfort and effectiveness, our custom Serkel helmets have a 3D-printed nylon shell, making them the lightest helmets manufactured in Australia for optimal baby comfort. The internal liner is made of foam and soft cotton, making it very gentle on your baby's skin, as well as breathable, moisture absorbent and hypoallergenic.

According to our own clinical research, the majority of babies wearing a Serkel have no change to their sleeping pattern or overall mood.

PUTTING THE SERKEL ON

1. Place your fingers inside the side opening of your baby's Serkel and pull the edges apart. The Serkel is very durable and can withstand a large degree of force, so breakage is not an issue.



2. Slide the Serkel over your baby's head and once roughly in position, release the edges slowly.



3. Position the Serkel so that the ears are in the spaces provided and the front of the Serkel is just above/on the eyebrows.



4. Secure the strap firmly enough so that the Serkel does not move. You will need to provide a small amount of pressure to close the Serkel firmly.





5. Once you have secured the strap, check the front and side positioning to ensure it is sitting correctly. Sometimes, it takes a couple of attempts to get the Serkel to sit correctly, especially if your baby is wriggling around!



TAKING THE SERKEL OFF

Basically, you are reversing the order by which you put the helmet on. Undo the strap, place your fingers on the edges of the side opening, pull the edges apart and lift the Serkel off.



INTRODUCTION TO WEARING THE SERKEL

The Serkel should be introduced to your baby over four days with the following regime as a guide:

- **Day 1 (day of fitting)** - 2 hours on, 1 hour off.

Remove the Serkel when your baby is sleeping, and put it on again upon waking.

- **Day 2** - 3 hours on, 1 hour off.



Remove during sleeping. Repeat this continuously through the day.

- **Day 3** - 4 hours on, 1 hour off.

Keep the Serkel on during daytime sleeps. Do not use the Serkel overnight.

- **Day 4** - Full time (23/24 hours) including night-time sleeping.

Following these guidelines will ensure your baby is completely at ease with their Serkel before using it overnight.

If your baby won't go to sleep on day 4, or has woken up and cannot be settled, remove their Serkel and try again the next day. It is not uncommon for some babies to repeat day 3 a couple of times.

These specific timelines are only a guide. Your baby may take longer to get used to their Serkel and that is completely fine. We do not recommend rushing the introduction of their Serkel.

It is important to check your baby's skin for any excessive pressure areas whilst the Serkel is off.

INCREASE IN BODY TEMPERATURE

Even though the Serkel is well ventilated, it will make your baby a little warmer than usual, so it is important to make sure your baby is not overheating.

Dress your baby down a layer (maybe leave off a singlet) and monitor for sweatiness on the neck and arms. Sweat can be an indicator of overheating.

If your baby looks like they are overheating, remove their Serkel and a layer of clothing, or change to a cooler item of clothing. Refit the Serkel once they have cooled down.

All babies get a sweaty head under the Serkel, even during winter. This is completely normal.

CLEANING YOUR SERKEL

It is important to keep the Serkel clean, as skin rashes can develop if they become dirty. Your baby's hair must also be washed each day.

Your baby should be wearing the Serkel for 23 hours per day. We recommend taking the Serkel off and having a one hour break right before bath time. You can clean the liner with a damp cloth or a baby wipe, and wait for it to dry naturally, or use a hair dryer on cool mode.

Do not put your Serkel on top, or in front of a heater to dry.

THINGS TO KNOW:

SERKEL SHIFT/ LIFTING/ TILTING

We build space into the Serkel to ensure your baby's head has room to grow. As a result, your baby's Serkel will move a little on their head, especially in the first few weeks of use.

A small amount of movement is acceptable (see picture below), and you may find yourself repositioning the Serkel a few times a day. It is important to note the Serkel **will not** hurt the ears or cause them to grow incorrectly.

If the ears are being squashed significantly or the Serkel drops consistently over the eyes, an adjustment at your orthotist clinic is needed.



Sometimes, it can be very difficult to stop the Serkel from shifting and occasionally multiple attempts at rectifying the problem are necessary.

SKIN RASHES

The Serkel has excellent ventilation in both the cotton liner and outer shell, and this minimizes heat, sweat and the chance of developing a skin rash.

Some babies are still affected however, especially in the warmer months, and the rash can present as a spotty, weepy skin irritation. If this starts to happen, remove the Serkel to allow the skin to dry out. Wash your baby's hair and hand wash the liner in mild soapy water, allowing the liner to dry completely before placing back inside the Serkel. If you are having trouble replacing the liner, contact your clinic and they can assist you.

Babies with pre-existing eczema can be prone to skin irritation when wearing their Serkel. We recommend using your normal eczema cream to reduce irritation.

PRESSURE MARKS



Pressure marks (see images above) are normal. You may find that when you remove the Serkel, some pressure marks remain on the skin - **this is normal**.

The Serkel may also cause a red mark on your baby's neck, as this is where the helmet "holds on". This is normal and will disappear once the Serkel is removed.

In rare cases, these marks may appear as angry red marks or welts. This can occur during a growth spurt, or if the Serkel is shifting too far. Sometimes we just leave the Serkel off until the skin looks better, and at other times we will need to adjust the Serkel.

If the skin is broken, remove the Serkel and call your clinic.

If you are concerned that a pressure area is too red, you can send through an email to your treating clinic with a picture to check and/or book a review appointment.

EYEBROW DROOP

The Serkel firmly contacts the high spot on your baby's forehead. As a direct result, it tends to push the eyebrows down during normal movement. If this happens, simply release the tension on the skin by undoing the strap and lifting the Serkel off the forehead. The skin will bounce back. It takes seconds to fix, and will cause no long-term changes to the skin around the eyebrows.



REVIEW APPOINTMENTS

Reviews of the Serkel and your baby's head are undertaken every 3-4 weeks. At these appointments, your orthotist will scan the head to check for growth and discuss any changes with you. We assess the fit of the Serkel to ensure there is still adequate room for growth. We will also review internal liners and replace them.

We understand that some people travel a long way to get a custom Serkel, and we are happy to stretch out the time between review appointments in these circumstances. However, if any issues arise, your orthotist will need to see your baby at their treating clinic. We understand this can be inconvenient for families if they must travel, but it is necessary for a well-fitting Serkel and ensures we will achieve the best possible result for your baby.

If you are concerned about an issue with your baby's Serkel, a review can be organised as soon as possible. You may prefer to send through some pictures to your clinic, and they will advise whether an appointment is necessary.

WEARING TIME/ EXPECTATIONS

For best results, we recommend the Serkel is worn 23 out of 24 hours a day for a period of 8 to 24 weeks (average time is 16 weeks). The length of treatment will depend on the initial head scan result, your baby's age and the amount of head growth that occurs. Generally, the older the baby is, the longer the treatment takes.

If the Serkel is taken off for extended periods of time (before you have been discharged from treatment) there is a high chance that we will not achieve the desired result. The Serkel must be worn for the recommended 23 hours per day for maximal efficacy.

RESULTS

Head shape improvement is unpredictable. We are currently tracking Serkel results through all of our patients, and so far the results have been excellent.

In some cases, we see slow improvement. Again, this is unpredictable and can be frustrating for both the orthotist and parents. We tend to see changes in head shape when there is overall head growth. Therefore, if the head growth has been minimal, there will be minimal change to the head shape. The age and head circumference of your baby are important factors for growth.

Results are also closely linked to wearing time. To achieve the best result, we recommend 23 hours of wear per day. If you decide to reduce this time, the results will be compromised.

The medical literature states, 'In a small percentage of cases, the head shape will not improve during helmet therapy'. We are yet to experience such results, but it is a statistical possibility to be aware of.

COMPLETION OF TREATMENT

During treatment, your baby will reach a point where growth slows down and the benefits of the Serkel will be reduced. Most of the time this is at a point where the improvement is satisfactory and there is no benefit in continuing treatment. At this stage, your orthotist will discuss the potential for further change, and a decision will be made to cease or continue with the Serkel.

A small percentage of babies will outgrow their Serkel, and a second Serkel may be required to achieve a satisfactory level of correction. This will occur when the circumference of the head can no longer be adequately contained within the Serkel, and the fit is compromised. This is more likely to occur in very severe cases. There is an additional cost associated with a second Serkel.





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