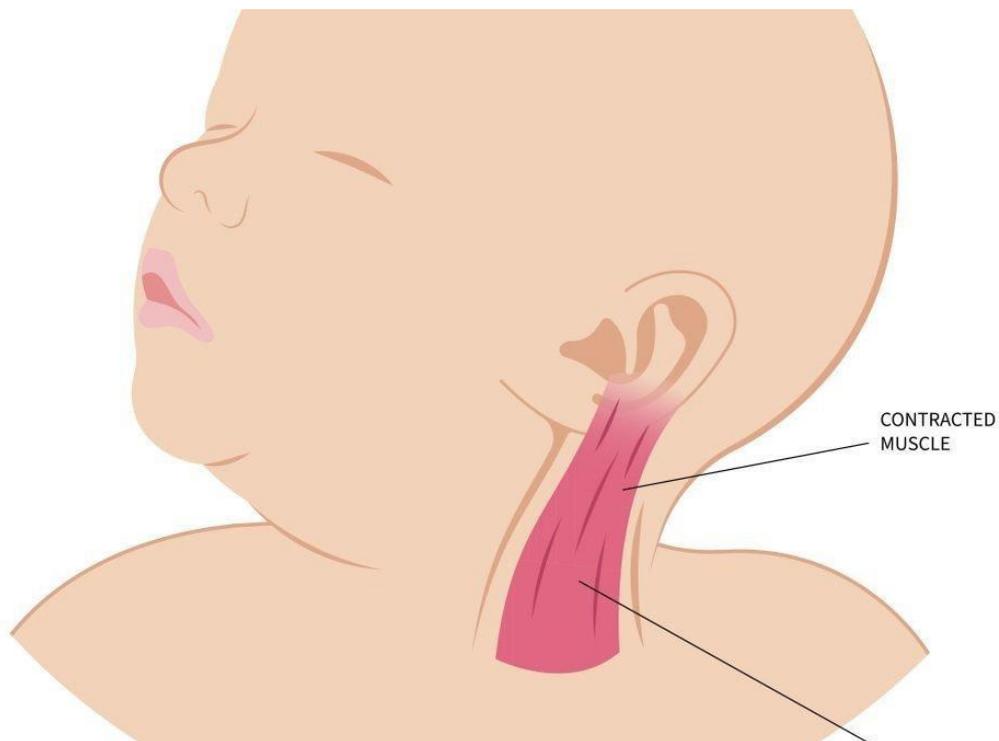


## Torticollis (Wry Neck / Twisted Neck)



### What is Torticollis?

Torticollis, also known as **wry neck**, is a condition where the neck becomes painful and stiff, often causing the head to tilt to one side.

It can occur suddenly and is common in children, teenagers, and adults.

Most cases are **not serious** and improve within a few days to weeks with simple treatment.

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## Causes

Torticollis can be caused by:

- **Muscle spasm** in the neck (most common)
- **Poor sleeping posture** • **Sudden neck movement or awkward position** • **Minor injury or strain**
- **Upper respiratory infection** (particularly in children, can irritate neck muscles/lymph nodes)
- **Cervical spine irritation** (rare)

Sometimes the cause is unknown — this is called **acute idiopathic torticollis**.

## Symptoms

Typical symptoms include:

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- Neck pain and stiffness
  - Head tilted to one side
  - Difficulty turning the head
  - Muscle spasm in the neck
  - Pain that may spread to the shoulder or upper back
  - Headaches (sometimes)

Symptoms often worsen in the morning and improve as the neck loosens during the day.

## Diagnosis

A healthcare professional can diagnose torticollis by examining your neck movement, posture, and muscle tension.

Scans or X-rays are **not usually needed** unless there are unusual symptoms or trauma.

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## Treatment

Most people recover within **1–2 weeks**. Treatment focuses on relieving pain and relaxing the muscles.

### 1. Heat

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- Apply a **warm compress or hot water bottle** to the neck for 10–15 minutes, 2–3 times daily.
  - Helps relax tight muscles.

## **2. Gentle Movement**

- Continue light, comfortable movement of the neck.
- Avoid keeping the neck completely still or using a collar unless advised.

## **3. Pain Relief**

- Paracetamol or ibuprofen can help reduce pain and inflammation (follow dosage guidance).
- Muscle relaxants may be used in adults if needed, but rarely required in children.

## **4. Massage**

- Gentle massage to painful muscles can ease tightness.
- Avoid deep or forceful techniques.

## **5. Good Posture**

- Use a supportive pillow.
- Avoid sleeping on the stomach.
- Keep screens at eye level to reduce strain.

## **6. Physiotherapy Exercises**

Start once the pain settles slightly:

### **Neck Side Stretch**

- Slowly tilt your ear towards your shoulder.
- Hold 10–20 seconds.
- Repeat both sides 3–5 times.

### **Rotation Stretch**

- Turn your head slowly to one side as far as comfortable.
- Hold 10–15 seconds.
- Repeat 3–5 times each direction.

### **Shoulder Rolls**

- Gently roll shoulders backwards and forwards.
- Repeat 10 times.

## **When to Seek Medical Advice**

Seek urgent medical help if you or your child has:

- Severe neck pain after an injury
- Fever, feeling very unwell, or signs of infection
- Neck stiffness with headache or sensitivity to light
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing
- Weakness, numbness, or tingling in the arms/legs

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- Symptoms lasting more than **2–3 weeks**

These symptoms may indicate a more serious condition requiring further assessment.

### **Prognosis**

- Most cases settle fully with simple measures.
  - Recurrence is possible, especially with poor posture or stress.
  - Torticollis does **not usually cause long-term problems**.
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