



Park Nicollet

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NEW LASER SCANNER IS A QUICK, PAINLESS WAY TO START RESHAPING INFANTS' HEADS

Park Nicollet's high-tech scanner eliminates time-consuming, messy and stressful step of making an infant head cast

ST. LOUIS PARK, Minn., (January 27, 2009) — A new leading-edge laser scanner redefines “quick and easy” while helping reshape infants’ heads. Many new parents know the term “deformational plagiocephaly”—the flat or asymmetrical shape of a newborn’s head. It’s a common occurrence that often goes away in the first few months. But if it doesn’t, it can lead to a permanent misalignment of the skull.

Infants with deformational plagiocephaly need to be fitted with a helmet to help reform their heads. Before laser scanners babies, parents and providers had to sit through a lengthy plaster-casting process—a process made worse by inevitable crying, squirming, and fussing. Now Park Nicollet provides the only FDA approved Starscanner in the metro area. It’s quick and painless. Two Class I eye-safe lasers and four cameras take an accurate image of a baby’s head in just two seconds. That image—far more accurate than hand measurements—is then used to custom build a helmet that will help reshape the baby’s head.

“I was impressed,” says Julie Schoshinski, whose son Beckett recently received a fitted helmet. “Our daughter went through the casting process years earlier. It was an afternoon of her crying. But this time, with the laser scanner, it took under a minute. There was no crying or fussing.”

The rate of deformational plagiocephaly started increasing in the 1990’s when doctors advised parents to put newborns to sleep on their backs to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). As SIDS in America decreased, diagnoses of deformational plagiocephaly increased. “Some cases can be severe. Premies especially have soft bones, and it is distressing for parents to see a misshapen head on a completely healthy child,” says Stefan Kramarczuk, MD, a pediatrician at Park Nicollet Clinic. “It’s also very important to treat this early,” added Dr. Kramarczuk. “After about a year, the skull loses its ability to correct itself, so the first six months are crucial.”

Starscanner also allows providers to measure the progress of therapy. Practitioners can compare scans and precisely measure the changes in an infant’s skull. Dr. Kramarczuk says parents are often relieved when they start seeing changes.

For more information, please contact Park Nicollet Pediatric Orthotics at 952.993.5040.

Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated care system that includes Park Nicollet Methodist Hospital, Park Nicollet Clinic, Park Nicollet Foundation and Park Nicollet Institute. Park Nicollet Health Services is based in St. Louis Park and has more than 8,200 employees, including 645 physicians on staff.