

Torticollis

AKA [wry neck](#)

A form of [dystonia](#) resulting in a failure to control head position (if shoulders or trunk are also involved, dystonia is a more proper label).

Torticollis refers to a twisting of the head and neck caused by a shortened sternocleidomastoid muscle, tipping the head toward the shortened muscle, while rotating the chin in the opposite direction. Torticollis is seen at all ages, from newborns to adults. It can be congenital or postnatally acquired.

Classification

All torticollis can be classified as either nonparoxysmal (nondynamic) or paroxysmal (dynamic). Causes of nonparoxysmal torticollis include congenital muscular; osseous; central nervous system/peripheral nervous system; ocular; and nonmuscular, soft tissue. Causes of paroxysmal torticollis are benign paroxysmal; spasmodic (cervical dystonia); Sandifer syndrome; drugs; increased intracranial pressure; and conversion disorder. The description, epidemiology, clinical presentation, evaluation, treatment, and prognosis of the most clinically significant types of torticollis follow ¹⁾.

Diagnosis

The first step should be always a careful and complete physical examination, which must include all systems. Imaging must be performed for ruling out underlying life-threatening diseases in children with torticollis, particularly, if acquired neurological symptoms exist. Besides craniospinal tumors, ophthalmological problems and central nervous system infections should also be kept in mind. Moreover, early diagnosis of these disorders will reduce mortality and morbidity. Therefore, alertness of clinicians in pediatric and pediatric neurosurgery practice must be increased about this alert symptom ²⁾.

Differential diagnosis

Congenital torticollis

Spasmodic torticollis

Extrapyramidal lesions

Psychogenic

Torticollis from atlantoaxial rotatory subluxation

Treatment

[Torticollis treatment.](#)

1)

Tomczak KK, Rosman NP. Torticollis. J Child Neurol. 2013 Mar;28(3):365-78. doi: 10.1177/0883073812469294. Epub 2012 Dec 26. Review. PubMed PMID: 23271760.

2)

Tumturk A, Kaya Ozcora G, Kacar Bayram A, Kabaklioglu M, Doganay S, Canpolat M, Gumus H, Kumandas S, Unal E, Kurtsoy A, Per H. Torticollis in children: an alert symptom not to be turned away. Childs Nerv Syst. 2015 Sep;31(9):1461-70. doi: 10.1007/s00381-015-2764-9. Epub 2015 Jun 5. PubMed PMID: 26043711.

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