

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment for Newborns



*A look at Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT),
why your baby may need this type of care
and how it may benefit your baby.*

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What is Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment?

Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment (OMT) is a series of gentle movements performed with the hands of a physician to relieve restrictions of normal motion that the doctor determines upon examination. These movements help the body heal itself by allowing for improved blood flow and nerve supply and more effective breathing.



Just like physicians who specialize in Obstetrics or Pediatrics, some doctors specialize in Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment. Doctors of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.s) offer all the best aspects of medical care that are familiar to most people. However, they have an added feature to their medical training that gives them something extra - additional training in the examination and treatment of the musculoskeletal system.

Osteopaths are taught to look at the “whole patient” and recognize problems that muscles, bones and connective tissues can have on the overall health of the patient.

Why does my baby need OMT?

The birth process has the potential to cause structural changes in your baby's musculoskeletal system that may be affecting his or her health. The baby's head and body have to pass through a small, tight space which can cause overlap of the bones and compression of the nerves and blood vessels. These changes can be more obvious if you had to push for a very long or short time, if your doctor needed to use a vacuum extractor or forceps to help your baby be born or if the baby is particularly large.

There are many possible reasons that your doctor could decide your baby needs OMT, including the following:

- Excessive moulding of the head and overlap of the bones
- Inability to suck or feed, or frequent spitting up, possibly due to compression of nerves exiting the back of the skull
- Excessive irritability or inability to calm the baby

You might think that a baby who was born by C-section would not be as likely to have these problems, but they can. Because they don't go through the birth canal, they don't get the benefits of the pressures which can help the baby take a better first breath or relieve any asymmetry of the baby's head that occurred from its position in the uterus.

How can my baby benefit from OMT?

While it is true that your baby may be able to overcome the structural changes that happened during birth, it is possible that there can be lasting effects. The gentle pressures and motions used by the doctor during your baby's treatment will help to restore the symmetry of the head and improve the blood flow to nerves.

You may notice your baby is able to nurse more effectively, that the bruising and swelling seen after birth may disappear more quickly, and that the shape of the head rounds more smoothly. Studies show early treatment may also help prevent colic, recurrent ear infections and learning problems later in childhood.