

Seven Reasons to Not Carry Baby Facing Out

Written by Jeanne Ohm, D.C.

Sunday, 01 June 2014 00:00 - Last Updated Friday, 15 September 2017 12:16

Chiropractors recommend wearing your baby facing inward. Here's why.

I love to see parents "wear" their babies! The positive effects of carrying their babies around with them are numerous, and it is heartening to see more and more parents return to this ancient, natural practice. That being said, when the modern world tries to introduce a commodity, it tends to make alterations based on style, not health or well-being. Such is the case with infant carriers where the baby faces outward. Telling parents that babies "want to look where they are going" is one such marketing ploy that created these outward-facing carriers. Unfortunately, the marketing is unsubstantiated by facts, and the position is not better for the baby. In truth, this practice has some major drawbacks for the baby's developing neurology and structure.

OUTER WOMB

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Here are seven reasons why outward-facing carriers cause our babies stress.

- 1** These carriers are not designed to support the child's developing hips. These carriers are still facing in the infant, and are very dependent on correct positioning for their optimal development. Like a horse in a poor typical outward-facing carrier, the baby's legs dangle down. This position is not only a consequence of normal hip development, it may have adverse effects.
The optimal positioning for a baby's legs is with the knees up above the hips in a squatting posture, and with the legs separated in a wide-type of position. That's why when you pick up an infant, he will instinctively draw his legs into this squat/stride position.
- 2** Outward-facing carriers put undue stress on the infant's spinal curves. Babies are not born with the secondary spinal curves of the neck and low back. These curves are established in time, through specific, self-directed movements. First, the neck strengthens and develops its inward curve, as the baby begins to hold his head up while lying on his belly. Then, as he becomes stronger and begins to crawl, the neck curve strengthens and the curve in the low back develops. When a baby is facing outward in a carrier, this primary "C" curve is forced into a reversed position before it has gone through the normal developmental stages it needs. Adversely affecting spinal alignment in these critical stages could have lifelong effects on the child's spine, nervous system and overall well-being.
- 3** Like a notice: Many parents who have their infant's facing outward are also holding their baby's legs up, or the baby is grasping the parent's fingers. This is because babies are self-balancing in this position, and have nothing to hold on to. In compensation, they tend to lean their pelvis back for balance. This, in turn, affects structural development and adds additional stress to the spine and nervous system.
- 4** Babies born with human faces, particularly those of their own parents, facing outward deprives them of this natural, innate need which enhances communication, security and optimal neurology of development. This early bonding lays the neurological foundation for empathy and the ability to relate to others.
- 5** Babies like to move on demand. In an outward-facing carrier, this is impossible. Nursing is no much more than a "quick snack", it is an opportunity for babies to "communicate" with their source of sustenance—Mama—as they are observing and learning in their own environment.
- 6** Babies like to sleep frequently. Dad can continue to go about his way and the baby can have a secure, warm middle of the same time. Also, when a baby falls asleep on the ground while being carried on his chest, she has the beneficial opportunity of sleeping with her head gently tucked to one side or the other. This simple posture stimulates an incredible amount of neurology of integration and development for the baby.
- 7** Wearing babies facing out hurts. The weight's center of gravity shifts forward, putting stress on the spine. In other words, outward-facing carriers are not ergonomically correct for parents, either. It adversely affects their spinal alignment, which compromises their overall health and well-being.
As parents in a consumer-driven world with many alternatives, it is important to look deeper into products as we make our informed choices. Chiropractors, in choosing options for their families' health and well-being, look first to what is most natural and physiologically sound. Wearing babies facing inward is the safest, most natural way to carry a baby, and has been practiced for centuries by our ancestors.

Dr. Jeanne Ohm is an best-selling author and speaker. Her passions include making chiropractors for better care in pregnancy, birth and infancy, sharing safe and simple techniques with the apt and practitioners, empowering mothers to make informed, conscious choices, and developing patients who are self-reliant. Her articles, courses and other information here: pathwaysforwellness.org/jeanneohm.html

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1. These carriers are not designed to support the child's developing hips.

These areas are still forming in the infant, and are very dependent on correct positioning for their optimal development. Take notice—in your typical outward-facing carrier, the baby's legs dangle down. This position is not only unsupportive of normal hip development, it may have adverse effects.

The optimal positioning for a baby's legs is with the knees up above the hips in a squatting posture, and with the legs separated in a straddle type of position. That's why when you pick up an infant, he will instinctively draw his legs into this squat/straddle position.

2. Outward-facing carriers put undue stress on the infant's spinal curves.

Babies are not born with the secondary spinal curves of the neck and low back. These curves are established in time, through specific, self-activated movements. First, the neck strengthens and develops its inward curve, as the baby begins to hold his head up while lying on his belly. Then, as he becomes stronger and begins to crawl, the neck curve strengthens and the curve in the low back develops. When a baby is facing outward in a carrier, this primary "C" curve is forced into a reversed position before it has gone through the normal developmental stages it needs. Adversely affecting spinal alignment in these critical stages could have lifelong effects on the child's spine, nervous system and overall well-being.

3. Take notice: Many parents who have their infants facing outward are either holding

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their baby's legs up, or the baby is grasping the parent's fingers.

This is because babies are off-balance in this position, and have nothing to hold on to. To compensate, they tend to lean their pelvis back for balance. This, too, affects structural development and adds additional stress to the spine and nervous system.

4. Babies bond with human faces, particularly those of their own parents.

Facing outward deprives them of this natural, innate need which enhances communication, security and optimal neurological development. This early bonding lays the neurological foundation for empathy and the ability to relate to others.

5. Babies like to nurse on demand. In an outward-facing carrier, this is impossible.

Nursing is so much more than just a “quick snack”; it is an opportunity for babies to “reconnect” with their source of assurance—Mom—as they are observing and learning in their new environment.

6. Babies like to nap frequently.

Dad can continue to go about his way and the baby can have a secure, warm cuddle at the same time. Also, when a baby falls asleep on the parent while being carried on his chest, she has the beneficial opportunity of sleeping with her head gently turned to one side or the other. This simple posture stimulates an incredible amount of neurological integration and development for the baby.

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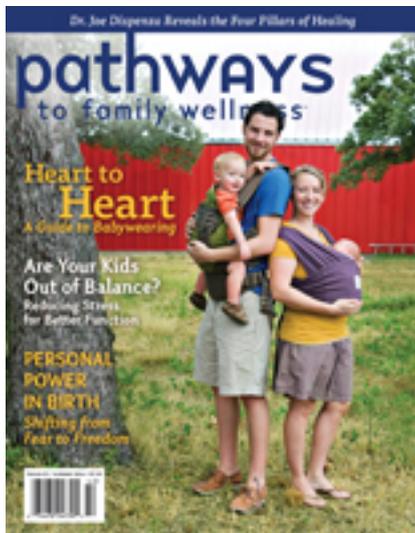
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The wearer's center of gravity shifts forward, putting strain on her spine. In other words, outward-facing carriers are not ergonomically correct for parents, either. It adversely affects their spinal alignment, which compromises their overall health and well-being.

As parents in a consumer-driven world with many commodities, it is important to look deeper into products as we make our informed choices. Chiropractors, in choosing options for their families' health and well-being, look first to what is most natural and physiologically sound. Wearing babies facing inward is the safest, most natural way to carry a baby, and has been practiced for centuries by our ancestors.



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