

Here is a tip for parents to try on your children if you do not get a RX for an Aspen.

You can get a small, child-sized, soft-foam collar at any medical supply store without a prescription. You can also order them online. Probably only cost about \$12 or less.

Now, it is important to have the right fit for the collar. If you have a sales person help you to fit it, that's great. You "might" have to buy one and then customize it at home. So, in that case, you buy a slightly too tall one. (Tall meaning it is too tall under the chin) You can make one smaller but can't make one bigger, so buy the one a bit too tall or big.

At home, carefully cut the "sock" covering open with scissors. Then put the collar on the child and see how much of the foam you need to cut (in front, laterally, under the chin) in order to keep his/her head/chin perfectly level.

it's important that you do not have a collar too short under the chin, which would allow hyper flexion (chin tucking toward chest) or hyperextension (chin tipping up, crunching back of head). You want to start cutting just a little off at a time, so you don't get too much. You can always cut more.

When you have it just right, sew up the sock covering which you cut open previously.

You can easily sew (from old silk scarves found at Goodwill or new fabric) nice and comfy coverings for the collars, which you can take off and hand wash occasionally.

This collar will help stabilize your child's head, and remind them to take it easy. Don't attach the velcro to where the collar fits too tightly, obviously.

If your child does feel a lot better, this can also be a diagnostic tool, as well. It means that the problems are related to head positioning and/or instability. It could be that with Chiari, if there is interrupted CSF flow, when he/she tips head forward or back, they are completely obstructing flow. Or it could be instability, and vital nerves are being compromised with head position.

Mainly, this is a low impact way to perhaps help your child. IF they will wear it. It IS hard to wear on a hot day, I admit.

It is not an Aspen collar, which is rigid. It is just something you can do without an rx and for just a little money. With coverings of various cartoon characters or action figures, many kids might really

enjoy wearing one.

This is something you might want to talk over with your child's doctor before doing. I can't see how it could harm a child, but I am not a doctor so of course, I'm not sure.

OH, another big point: your child should wear the collar intermittently. Something like 3 hours on and 3 hours off, that sort of thing. Wearing it constantly is "counterproductive" in that it will weaken the neck muscles and cause greater instability.

Many of us sleep in almost a fetal position. Think of how we are crunching our chins downward in that position and we may be obstructing CSF flow at that time, or impinging nerves in the skull base area. So, wearing one while sleeping is often of benefit.

Remember, I'm not a doctor, this is just advice based on my own experience, and also on that of many others I've read (or talked to) over the last 3.5 years.