

What is Tummy Time?

Tummy Time is any time that your baby spends on his/her tummy. And you can start Tummy Time the day you bring your baby home from the hospital! Every time your baby has Tummy Time, they will gain better neck and head control, plus strengthen the upper body. Tummy Time will also help to prevent flat spots on your baby's head.

Not only will the suggestions and activities provided in this brochure help to promote a nicely shaped head, they will also provide opportunities to bond and play with your baby. These guidelines have been developed to make Tummy Time fun for your baby, as well as to help prevent developmental delays that can occur with babies who sleep on their backs. If you have questions or concerns regarding your baby's development, please contact your healthcare provider.



sids
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Tummy Time Tips & Tools

The importance of supervised Tummy Time.



Back to Sleep ~ Tummy to Play



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The Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recommended that you place your baby on his or her back to sleep to lower the risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Tummy Time Tips

Back-slept babies are often fussy when first starting to play on their tummies. That's why it is important to start Tummy Time within the first days of being home.

- Always place baby on a firm, safe surface for Tummy Time activities. Avoid waterbeds, bean bag chairs and padded furniture.
- When possible, limit use of strollers, swings, car seats and bouncy seats during baby's awake times. Vary baby's position at least every 20 minutes throughout the day during play time.
- Introduce Tummy Time when your baby is the most tolerant and rested. Give breaks between activities and gradually work to increase time spent on tummy.
- Parents should respond to cries, but continue Tummy Time experiences as the baby's tolerance increases.
- Talk with your doctor about Tummy Time for play. Premature and special-needs babies may have unique circumstances that need consideration. Consult a Pediatric Physical, Occupational or Developmental Therapist for more information.



Tummy Time Tools

Newborns

- Lay baby on your chest facing you. Talk and sing to your baby to encourage him to lift and move his head.
- Infants often tolerate tummy (prone) position more in an upright, slanted position.
- Place baby on a soft, thin blanket on the floor while you (and siblings!) join him. Move a black/white/red object slowly in front of him to encourage side to side head movement.
- Carry baby in a "football" hold.
- Toys should be quiet and presented slowly at this age so that baby does not get overwhelmed or frustrated.

1 – 2 Months

- Place baby on a soft, thin blanket on a firm surface with a rolled towel under baby's chest for support. Smile, laugh, and stick your tongue in and out to build baby's imitation skills.
- Play games like peek-a-boo and "where's mama" while baby is on your belly. The more you play and engage with them on their tummies, the more they will associate this as a fun time with mommy and daddy.
- Babies are most interested in faces, smells and voices as their sensory system develops. Lay baby on you to see you, or put a mirror in front of them so they can see themselves.




3 – 5 Months

- Place baby over your legs, supporting the chest with your leg. Dangle bright toys in front of them to reach and grasp for. Move toys to either side to encourage side-to-side head movement.
- Lay baby on his belly, prop him up on his elbows and hold arms to give extra support. Talk, sing and make faces to encourage baby to stay in this position for longer periods.

6 Months and Older

- Give baby multiple opportunities for floor time each day. They need many sensory experiences and should move around freely to explore their environment. Visually stimulate baby by placing toys around to move, pivot and scoot or crawl to. Remember to place toys in front and to the sides to motivate them in all directions.
- Use colorful, engaging toys such as pictures of family members and other babies to develop baby's recognition skills. Babies love to look at faces and themselves at this stage so use a baby-safe mirror and books with faces.
- Many babies will be sitting up at this stage. Balance and coordination will increase when allowed to play in this position. Keep baby as free of bouncers, high chairs, walkers and activity gyms as possible. Baby needs to learn to transition from back to tummy, tummy to all fours, and then to sitting when not confined.

 Tummy Time should always be supervised by an adult! Never leave a baby unattended, with young siblings, or with pets while on his/her tummy.