

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS

TUMMY TIME

Placing your baby on their tummy when they are awake and supervised:

- Promotes healthy child development
- Can help prevent misshaping of their head

BENEFITS OF TUMMY TIME

- Prevents flathead
- Helps develop head control
- Helps strengthen back, neck, shoulders, arms and hands, which promotes gross motor development including crawling, sitting and rolling
- Supports fine motor development by building strength to use hands and arms to reach, grasp and play
- Promotes sensory development by providing natural opportunities for the skin of a baby's stomach, legs, arms and face to touch and experience the different surfaces they are lying on
- Promotes body awareness as legs and arms move against a surface. The friction that is created lets your baby know where their body is located in space
- Enables your baby to visually explore their environment from a new perspective
- Can improve sucking and swallowing coordination when feeding

To reduce risks associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), babies are safest when put to sleep on their backs and should be provided with supervised time on their tummy when awake.

“Back to sleep, tummy to play!”

HOW MUCH TUMMY TIME DOES MY BABY NEED?

- Tummy time is an important activity and needs to be part of a baby's daily routine
- Three to five minutes of play and interaction on tummy, two to three times per day is recommended. The more time the better!
- You can start placing your baby on their tummy within the first days after your baby is born
- As your baby grows older and stronger, the amount of time spent on their tummy should increase
- Some babies may not like to play on their tummies at first, but with ongoing and consistent opportunities, they will begin to enjoy the position

PUBLIC HEALTH

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TUMMY TIME WITHIN DAILY ROUTINES

- Lie on your back and place your baby on your chest. Talk to your baby to encourage them to lift their head to look at you



- As your baby grows stronger, you can give your baby support by putting a rolled towel under their chest. You can also place your baby over your leg. Place your baby's arm in front of the towel or leg as seen below



- Get on the floor and interact with your baby and/or encourage older siblings to lie face-to-face on the floor with your baby
- Provide many interesting items for your baby to look at for example brightly coloured toys and a mirror



- As your baby gets stronger, put toys around your baby to encourage reaching and movement skills
- Carry your baby in tummy down position; be sure to provide support with your forearm



A great way to include tummy time into your daily routine is by rolling your baby onto their tummy after diaper changes and before picking them up. Do not leave them unsupervised on high surfaces.

STRATEGIES TO HELP WITH FLATHEAD

- Provide time for baby to be on tummy
- Minimize time spent in various baby gear such as car seats or bouncy chairs as babies need time to move and explore
- Play with your baby on the floor in a side lying position and have toys available to play with. You can place a small rolled up towel behind baby for support



WHEN YOUR CHILD HAS A PREFERENCE FOR LOOKING TO ONE SIDE

- Place toys on less preferred side for baby to look at
- When changing your baby's diaper, stand on your baby's less preferred side so they turn to their less preferred direction to look at you
- Place your baby in a bassinet/crib so that they need to look to their less preferred side when looking around the room

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Some babies will need special consideration around tummy time needs. Speak to your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns
- For a video modelling tummy time ideas visit: Niagara Children's Centre <https://youtu.be/mrdNw2rkTnA>

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