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## The Importance of Tummy Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing babies on their **backs to sleep** and their **tummies to play** as part of a **daily routine**.

- A few minutes a day, a few times a day, can help your baby get used to Tummy Time and help prevent early motor delays.
- If you begin early (even from just a few days old) and keep a regular schedule, your baby will learn to love Tummy Time.

- Tummy Time helps develop the muscles in their back, neck, and trunk, in order to meet all their infant development milestones.

- It helps babies build strength and muscle control, which help them learn how to push up, roll over, sit, crawl, and pull to a stand.

- Babies who don't spend time on their tummies often have delays in developing motor skills.



***Tummy Time can help prevent early motor delays.***

## Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play!

Healthy babies are safest when sleeping on their backs at nighttime and during naps. Side or tummy sleeping is not as safe, and is not recommended.

Tummy Time is for babies who are awake and being watched. Your baby needs this to develop strong muscles.

# Can I Do Tummy Time with My Newborn?

## Did You Know?

Tummy Time is important because:

1. It helps prevent flat spots on your baby's head.
2. It helps make your baby's shoulder and neck muscles stronger so your baby can start to sit, crawl, and walk.
3. It improves your baby's motor skills (using muscles to move and complete an action).

## NOTE:

The information in this newsletter should not be used in place of the medical care and advice of your pediatrician.

There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may suggest based on individual facts and circumstances.

## YES YOU CAN!

All babies benefit from Tummy Time. The sooner you start, the better your baby will become at it.

Here are the top five moves you can do as soon as your baby is born:

### 1. Tummy to Tummy:

Lie down on the floor or a bed, flat or propped up on pillows. Place your baby on your chest or tummy so that you're face-to-face. Always hold firmly for safety.

### 2. Eye-Level Smile:

Get down, level with your baby to encourage eye contact. Roll up and place a blanket under the chest and upper arms for added support.

### 3. Lap Soothe:

Place your baby face-down across your lap to burp or soothe him. A hand on your baby's bottom will help steady and calm.

### 4. Tummy-Down Carry:

Slide one hand under the tummy and between the legs when carrying baby tummy down. Nestle your baby close to your body.

### 5. Tummy Minute:

Place your baby on his tummy for one or two minutes every time you change him. Start a few minutes at a time and try to work up to an hour a day in short intervals by the end of three months.

**Don't get discouraged, every bit of Tummy Time makes a difference!**



## What if my baby doesn't like tummy time?

Some babies may not like Tummy Time at first. Try these tips, and eventually your baby will enjoy playing in this position.

1. **Start in small spurts of time.** Gradually work up to longer periods of time as the baby gets used to it.
2. **Make sure you're doing Tummy Time at a good time of day.** If your baby is hungry or is full from just eating, Tummy Time might be uncomfortable. Make sure your baby is alert. If she gets sleepy, put her on her back for a nap in her crib.
3. **Some babies prefer an incline.** A rolled up towel or receiving blanket under baby's chest might help do the trick.
4. **Every time you change your baby, do a little Tummy Time.** Once your baby expects it, she may not protest it as much.

## How can I exercise my baby while he is on his tummy?

There are lots of ways to play with your baby while he is on his tummy.

1. **Place yourself or a toy just out of the baby's reach.** Encourage him to reach for you or the toy.
2. **Place toys in a circle around the baby.** Reaching to different points in the circle allow him to develop important muscles to roll over, scoot, and crawl.
3. **Lie on your back with baby on your chest.** Baby will lift his head and use his arms to see your face.
4. **With adult supervision, have a young child play with the baby while on his tummy.** They have the energy for playing with babies and usually enjoy their role as the "big kid."

For more information on these and other topics, please visit the following:

Zerotothree.org  
Kidshealth.org  
AAP.org

Pathways.org  
HealthyChildren.org  
Nichd.nih.org