



# Tummy Time and Your Infant

## Overview:

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommended infants be placed on their backs when sleeping, promoting safe sleep, to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Because of this, parents are less likely to place awake and alert infants on their tummies. Subsequently, some babies have developed problems with neck movement, head shape, and motor development.

Placing infants who are awake and alert on their stomachs is beneficial. Babies who experience “tummy time” often receive messages through their bodies to encourage head control, back strength, movement and visual development. They are also more likely to have a rounded head shape. When babies are placed on their stomachs they are able to work on skills required for rolling, sitting, crawling, standing, walking, and interacting with the environment. Tummy time promotes brain development and is essential to the development of motor skills.

## Getting Started:

- Tummy time begins as soon as your baby comes home.
- Lie on your back and place the baby on her tummy on your chest. Once she tolerates this, try moving her to a blanket on the floor.
- Start play sessions with tummy time when your baby is “fresh”.
- Begin tummy time for few minutes (as long as your baby tolerates), several times a day when your baby is awake, until the baby tolerates longer sessions.
- By 3 months of age, your baby should be up to a total of 1 hour of tummy time a day.
- Provide supervised tummy time on a firm, flat surface during the baby's waking hours.
- If needed, place a rolled towel or receiving blanket under the baby's arms or shoulders to make it easier for her to lift and turn her head.
- Place interesting toys, such as mirrors and rattles, where the baby can see and reach for them.
- Lie on your tummy beside the baby so she can see your face up close. Babies love to look at faces!
- Once baby starts to fuss, help him to roll to his back to help learn the motor skills for rolling.

Remember, tummy time is important so any amount of time your baby lies on their stomach is helpful

## Resources:

1. <https://pathways.org>
2. <https://www.healthychildcare.org>
3. SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2016 Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment
4. Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. *Pediatrics* originally published online October 24, 2016 doi: 10.1542/peds.3016-2938

