

Tummy Time

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Tummy time is an activity that keeps your baby from lying flat in one position. It can help strengthen your baby's head and neck muscles and allow him or her to explore his or her surroundings. Tummy time is important to help your baby advance his or her developmental skills.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends tummy time 2 to 3 times each day for short periods of time for newborns. This can be as little as 3 to 5 minutes. You should increase the amount of time as your baby gets older. The goal is to get up to 60 minutes of tummy time each day by 3 months old.

Place your baby on his or her stomach when he or she is awake and someone is watching. A good time to give your baby some tummy time may be after each diaper change or after waking up from a nap.

Do not put your baby on a small pillow or other prop when he or she is sleeping. Your baby should be placed on his or her back to sleep.

Benefits of Tummy Time

Tummy time can:

- help prevent flat spots on the head
- strengthen your baby's head and neck muscles
- strengthen the muscles your baby needs to roll, sit and crawl.

Stages of Tummy Time

- **0 to 2 months:** Your baby may only be able to lift his or her head for short periods of time. Your baby may start to prop himself or herself on his or her arms.
- **3 to 4 months:** Your baby may be able to lift his or her head and look around while propping himself or herself on his or her elbows. Your baby may start to reach for toys while on his or her tummy.
- **5 months and older:** Your baby may be able to lift his or her head and look around while pushing up onto extended elbows. Your baby will eventually start to tuck his or her knees in to get ready to start crawling.

Tips for Successful Tummy Time

- Place a mirror in front of your baby. He or she may enjoy looking at his or her reflection.
- Place toys just out of reach of your baby, so he or she will spend time reaching for them or looking at them.
- Play with your baby. Lie down in front of your baby and talk or sing to him or her.
- If your baby struggles with tummy time, start with shorter periods of time and change positions more often.
- You can also try lying down and laying your baby on your chest and cuddling.