

SAFE Kids HEALTHY Kids HAPPY Kids



Tummy Time For Babies



Putting babies on their tummies is a good way to help them develop strong neck and trunk muscles. Babies who spend time on their

tummies will roll, crawl, sit and pull up to a stand earlier than babies who do not get much tummy time.

Doctors tell parents to put their babies to sleep on their backs. This helps prevent SIDS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Putting babies to sleep on their back is very important. Fewer babies have died since parents have followed the “Back To Sleep” rule. Many parents, however, also put their babies in hard carriers during the day. If babies do not get some time on their tummy, they may have flattening on one or both sides of their head.

You can help your baby develop strong muscles and have a nicely shaped head.

- Take your baby out of the infant carrier as often as possible.
- Use a sling, front carrier or back pack instead of a rigid carrier.
- Lie on your back and hold your baby on your chest facing you. She will lift her head to find you.
- Lie on your tummy to play with your baby. Place toys in front of your baby to encourage him to reach.

- Place toys on both sides of your baby to help him reach with both hands.
- Carry your baby with his head on your shoulder. Your baby will lift his head to look at you. Change shoulders so your baby will turn and lift his head to both sides.
- Place your baby at opposite ends of the crib to sleep—every other night. Use a chart if you forget.
- Place your baby belly-down on your lap when burping. Support your baby’s head with your hand in a midline position, when he lifts it.
- Gently roll your baby onto her belly after diapering and play for a few minutes.
- Gently roll your baby from side to side when changing his clothes. Take a few minutes to play with him on his belly.

Never leave your baby alone on his tummy.

As your baby grows, she will master new skills. This will give her an “I can do it” attitude. As you praise your baby’s efforts, she will gain the confidence to keep trying new tasks.

If you are just beginning: Some parents start tummy-time play for about a minute or so at 1 or 2 months of age. By then, babies start to hold their heads up for a short time. Other parents wait until a child is 3 or 4 months old when the neck and shoulder muscles are stronger. As your baby’s neck and upper body control improves, increase the amount of tummy-time play. — *Dr. Kathleen Alfano, Ph.D., Director of Child Research at Fisher-Price®*

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.
544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.