

Babies and Tummy Time

Tummy time is an important activity and needs to be part of a baby's daily routine.

In the first months of life, babies learn about movement of their body and develop the physical skills required for rolling over, sitting and crawling. They learn to respond and adapt to challenges. For this reason, a baby needs the opportunity to play on its tummy during waking hours (while being supervised) and to spend limited time in an infant seat/carrier, swing or other restrictive devices which inhibit free movement.

Visual stimulation is another benefit of the tummy position. Unlike a baby on its back (who sees only the ceiling and objects on either side), a baby placed on the tummy will lift its head and view the world at eye-level. In 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published recommendations to put healthy babies to sleep on their backs, resulting in a dramatic reduction of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). The AAP's "Back to Sleep – Tummy to Play" campaign reminds parents to provide babies with adequate supervised tummy time, to promote growth and development.

Not all babies enjoy tummy time. Some may cry or refuse to lift their head. We have provided guidelines to help you with this challenge and to make tummy time an enjoyable bonding experience and a productive part of your baby's life, while mastering important skills.



Cranial Technologies, Inc.

Plagiocephaly (abnormal head shape in infants) – its causes, prevention and treatment – has been the focus of Cranial Technologies since the company was founded in 1986.

We publish research articles in collaboration with craniofacial and neurological surgeons, present papers at national and international medical conferences and are the leading advocate in educating professionals and parents about plagiocephaly.

Cranial Technologies' DOC Band® was the first FDA-cleared cranial banding device and remains the only one with clinical studies proving its safety and effectiveness. As the incidence of plagiocephaly increased and demand for its treatment grew, we opened clinics providing DOC Band treatment in the US and Europe.

While the Back-to-Sleep campaign has reduced the risk of SIDS, it has overshadowed the importance of tummy time and its benefit to a baby's development of motor control and planning, sensory integration, environmental awareness, and postural strength.

Cranial Technologies' clinicians (pediatric physical and occupational therapists, orthotists and nurses) worked together to prepare the information for this brochure. Their combined professional knowledge of a child's motor development and skill acquisition was incorporated to help parents in providing effective tummy time activities.



Tummy Time

Understanding the Importance of Tummy Time



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Newborn



Two months

Activity: Place your baby on its stomach. If the baby cannot lift its head, place your hand on the baby's bottom to shift the weight from the upper body. If the baby is still unable to lift its head, put a rolled towel under the chest or place the baby over your leg. Another option is to lay the baby on your chest, offering a secure, cuddly feeling while encouraging a head lift.

Benefit: Your baby will develop better head control and upper body strength, while learning to lift the head and neck.



Three



Five months

Activity: Your baby has gained more back and neck strength and, when placed on the tummy, can prop itself up on the forearms. If additional support is needed, a Boppy® or rolled towel can be helpful. Enjoy floor time with your baby – use toys or mirrors to encourage weight shifting and reaching. Your baby is now able to interact with the environment at eye level.

Benefit: As your baby gets stronger, he or she will push up onto extended arms to reach and play. This prepares the baby for sitting and crawling.



Six



Nine months

Activity: Now your baby has become stronger in both the upper and lower back. Play games, such as “airplane” by lifting the baby up with support only on the hips and/or waist. Another variation is to rest the baby on your bent legs and move your legs up and down.

Benefit: Develops full body strength, which will enable your baby to crawl and explore his or her surroundings.

