

# 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 develop flat spots on their head.

Start with 3 to 5 minute sessions of tummy time - 2 to 3 times a day. Work up to 60 minutes a day - total.

Help your baby develop strong muscles.

- Take her out of the infant carrier as often as possible.
- Carry him in a sling, front carrier or back pack instead of a rigid carrier.
- Place her belly-down on your lap when burping. Support her head with your hand in a mid-line position, when she lifts it. Lie on your back and hold your baby on your chest facing you. She will lift her head to find you.
- Gently roll him onto his belly after diapering and play for a few minutes.
- Gently roll her from side to side when changing her clothes. Take a few minutes to play with her on her belly.
- Lie on your back and hold him on your chest facing you. He will lift his head to find you.
- Place her on a clean blanket on the floor. Lie on your tummy to play. Place toys in front of her to encourage her to reach. Place toys on both sides of her to help her reach with both hands.
- Carry him 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 her at opposite ends of the crib to sleep—every other night. Use a chart if you forget.

**Never leave your baby alone on her tummy.**



*Brought to you by Parent Help Line at HSHS St. John's Children's Hospital  
to help keep kids safe, healthy and happy.*



**Call the Parent Help Line. Help is just a phone call away.**

1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
[www.parenthelpline.org](http://www.parenthelpline.org)

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