

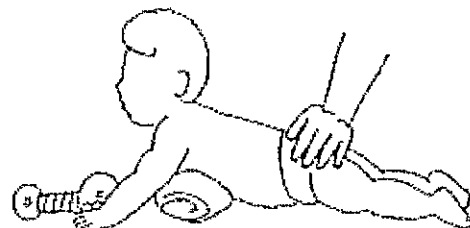
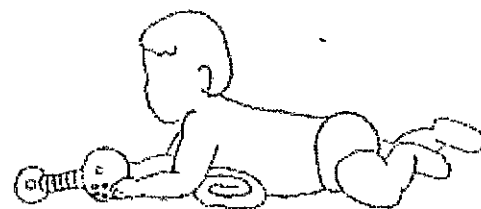
Tummy Time is Important!

WHY?

With time on their tummies, a baby learns how to move their head, how to push with their arms and how to move their body. The strength and coordination learned while on their tummy will help a baby learn to crawl, to sit better and later, to pull-to-stand.

With the rule on *BACK TO SLEEP*, we are finding that parents are not putting their babies on their sides or on their stomachs enough *when the baby is awake*.

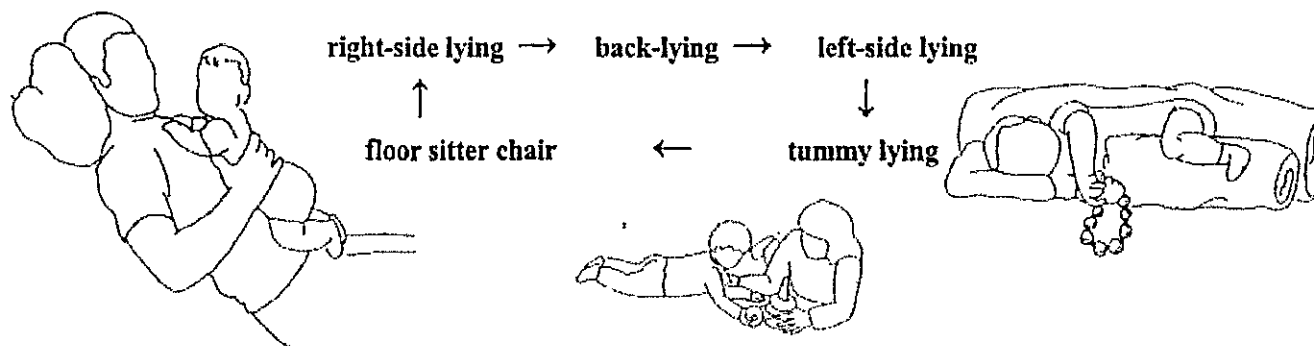
This is because many babies will fuss and cry when placed on their stomachs. Their upset is easy to see: a newborn's head is so big and they are still learning which muscles to use to lift up off the floor. The fussing will decrease with time and practice.



- Without regular playtime on the tummy, your baby may be slower at learning how to move their body. Regular changes in playtime position will also prevent flattening of your baby's skull.

Suggestions to help with Tummy Time:

- **Start as soon as you get home from the hospital!** Your baby will only get bigger and protest louder if you wait. If your baby has not used their muscles to lift their head and shoulders when small, the task becomes even harder when they have put on more weight. Aim for no less than 3 times a day. Start a few minutes and gradually build up the time on the tummy.
- **Get down to eye-level with your baby:** make faces, sing songs, jingle bells and toys. You can make it less work for your baby by bringing their arms forward to prop themselves up on their elbows. Putting a roll of towels under their chest will help keep their arms forward.
- **Try putting your baby on their tummy just before feeding** while you are preparing to breast feed or making up a bottle of formula. The baby won't spit up because there is nothing in their stomach yet. Your baby may learn that there will be a reward of food after being on their tummy.
- **After feeding, do some Tummy Time with your baby on your chest** as you lean back on the arm of a sofa. Since the baby's head is higher than their stomach, spit-up is less likely.
- **Make a routine playtime schedule for changes in position so that your baby has a variety of movement learning experiences. For example:**



Safe sleep for babies

Good sleeping habits are important to your baby's physical health and emotional well-being. An important part of safe sleep for babies is the environment where your baby sleeps, his sleeping position, the kind of crib or bed, type of mattress, and so on.

Creating a safe sleep environment for your baby will reduce the risk of injuries and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is when a baby dies unexpectedly while sleeping and no cause is identified after a thorough investigation, including a full autopsy.

SIDS is less common in babies whose parents do not smoke—especially babies whose mothers don't smoke during pregnancy—and in babies who sleep on their back.

Where should my baby sleep?

For the first 6 months, the safest place for your baby is on his back, in a crib in your room. This will make night-time breastfeeding easier, and may help protect against SIDS.

How can I create a safe sleep environment for my baby?

- Starting from birth, place your baby to sleep on her back for the first year of life, at night time and for naps. When she can turn over on her own, you don't need to force her on the back position.
- Use a firm, flat surface for sleep. Waterbeds, air mattresses, pillows, couches/sofas or soft materials are not safe sleep surfaces for babies. Babies can turn onto their stomach and bury their face in these soft materials, not getting enough air to breathe. Car seats and infant carriers should not replace the crib for your baby's sleep.
- Keep soft materials out of your baby's sleep environment: quilts, comforters, bumper pads, stuffed animals, pillows and other pillow-like items.
- Make sure your baby is not too warm. Use only a light blanket, or dress your baby in sleepers if the room is cool.
- Keep your baby away from cigarette smoke. Babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy and babies who are exposed to smoke after birth are at an increased risk of SIDS.
- Be sure your baby's crib meets Health Canada's most current safety standards. For more details, visit http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/crib-lits/index_e.html or contact the nearest Consumer Product Safety Office, listed in the blue pages of your phone book.

Preventing flat heads in babies who sleep on their backs

Most parents know that the safest way to put their baby to sleep is on its back. Babies who sleep on their backs are much less likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Babies who always sleep with their head to the same side can develop flat spots.

What is SIDS?

SIDS is when a baby dies suddenly and unexpectedly – for no clear reason, even after an investigation. Babies who die of SIDS are usually under 1 year old. SIDS is sometimes called crib death.

Why do some babies develop flat spots on their heads?

Babies' skulls are very soft and the bones can be affected by pressure. Babies also have weak neck muscles. Because of this, they tend to turn their heads to one side when placed on their backs.

If babies always turn their heads to the same side, the skull may flatten. This is known as a 'flat head'. The medical term for this is positional plagiocephaly.

A little bit of flattening goes away on its own. More serious flattening may be permanent, but it will not affect a baby's brain or development.

Can a baby's flat head be prevented?

Yes. A simple way to prevent your baby from getting a flat head is to change the position of the baby's head each day.

Because babies like to have something interesting to look at, they tend to turn their head to look out into their room rather than toward the wall. This way they can see you as you come and go.

Here's how you can change the position of your baby's head while still giving her the same 'view'.

- One day, place your baby with her head at the head of the crib.
- The next day, place your baby with her head at the foot of the crib.
- Each day, alternate your baby's orientation in the crib.
- Check to make sure that your baby is always looking out into the room.

You might also put a mobile on the side of the crib facing the room to encourage your baby to look that way.

Is bedsharing safe?

Some parents decide to bedshare, which means sleeping on the same surface with your baby.

Adult beds are not designed with infant safety in mind. That's why they are not the safest place for babies to sleep:

- A baby can become trapped in a space between the mattress and the wall, or between the mattress and the bed frame.
- A baby can fall off a bed.
- An adult can roll over and suffocate a baby.
- Soft bedding, such as comforters or duvets, can cover a baby's head and cause overheating. Babies who get their head covered during sleep are at increased risk of SIDS.

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib close to your bed.

What about breastfeeding and safe sleep?

Breast milk is the ideal food for babies. The CPS recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life. Your baby will be ready for other foods at 6 months, but you can continue to breastfeed for up to 2 years and beyond. The longer you breastfeed, the greater the benefits for you and your baby.

When you are breastfeeding, having your baby near you makes night-time feedings easier. But when you bring your baby into bed with you to breastfeed, it's easy for both of you to fall asleep, especially if you are lying down. Because of this, keep your baby's crib close to your bed, and put your baby back to sleep after the feeding is finished. Your baby will be close when it's time for the next feeding.

If you fall asleep with your baby in your bed, the risk of SIDS is even greater if you:

- smoked during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
- had alcohol to drink.
- have taken any drugs (legal or illegal) that could make you very sleepy.
- are extremely tired (more than usual).

Under these circumstances, never take your baby into bed with you, even for a feeding. When it's time to feed your baby, be sure to go to a comfortable chair or other spot where you will not fall asleep.

Other surfaces are also unsafe for babies. Never lie down or sleep with your baby or let your baby sleep alone on a couch, sofa or armchair. A baby can become trapped down the sides or in the cushions and suffocate.

For more information visit: www.caringforkids.cps.ca

Updated: March 2009

This information should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your physician. There may be variations in treatment that your physician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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Essential Tummy Time Moves

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends placing babies on their backs to sleep and their tummies to play as part of a daily routine. Just a few minutes a day, a few times a day, can help your baby get used to "tummy time" and help prevent early motor delays. If you begin early (even from just a few days old) and maintain a consistent schedule, your baby will learn to love tummy time. This helps develop the muscles in their back, neck and trunk, on their way to meeting all their infant development milestones.

Here are the top five moves you can begin as soon as your baby is born:



Tummy to Tummy~

Lie down on the floor or a bed, flat or propped up on pillows.
Place baby on your chest or tummy, so that you're face-to-face.
Always hold firmly for safety.



Eye-Level Smile~

Get down level with your baby to encourage eye contact.
Roll up and place a blanket under the chest and upper arms for added support.



Lap Soothe~

Place your baby face-down across your lap to burp or soothe him.
A hand on your baby's bottom will help steady and calm.



Tummy-Down Carry~

Slide one hand under the tummy and between the legs when carrying
baby tummy down.
Nestle the baby close to your body.



Tummy Minute~

Place your baby on her tummy for one or two minutes every time you change her.
Start a few minutes at a time and try to work up to an hour a day in shorter intervals
by the end of three months.
Don't get discouraged every bit of tummy time makes a difference!

What else can I do to prevent my baby from getting a flat head?

Babies should also have supervised 'tummy time' when they are awake, several times a day.

Not only will time on the tummy help prevent a flat spot on the head, but it is important for your baby's development.

If your baby still develops flat spots, talk to your paediatrician or family doctor.

What else can I do to help reduce the risk of SIDS?

The most important thing you can do to reduce the risk of SIDS is place your baby on his back to sleep. You should also:

- make sure that nobody smokes around your baby;
- avoid putting too many clothes and covers on your baby; and
- breastfeed your baby, it may give some protection against SIDS.

This information was developed by the Canadian Paediatric Society in collaboration with The Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths, the Canadian Institute of Child Health and Health Canada.

Reviewed: March 2007

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