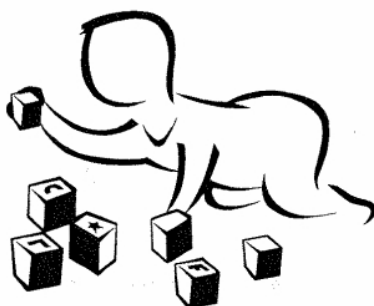


Tummy Time

Since 1992 the American Academy of Pediatrics has promoted the **Back to Sleep** campaign in effort to reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). By placing an infant on his/her back when sleeping, the number of deaths due to SIDS has decreased by 40%. However this, combined with the increasing use of infant carriers, bouncers and swings has reduced the amount of time infants spend in prone, or **tummy time**. As a result, nationwide pediatricians are seeing infants demonstrating a delay in meeting the gross motor milestones (rolling, propping up on arms, crawling, sitting and standing).

What is tummy time?

Tummy time is any activity that provides an infant an opportunity to be positioned on his/her stomach. These activities occur when the infant is awake and in a quiet/alert state, providing the infant a chance to explore the surrounding environment both physically and visually. It prepares the infant for crawling, rolling, sitting and standing by strengthening the neck, shoulder, trunk and arm muscles. Tummy time provides the infant with visual stimulation, allowing the baby to explore the surrounding environment, not just what is in front of them.



How can I incorporate tummy time into my baby's day?

Tummy time can be offered throughout your baby's day starting with 1-2 minutes 2-3 times a day, working up to 30 minutes a day. Infants ages 0-2 months can be placed in prone on the floor, over a rolled towel under their arms. You can lie on the floor, placing your baby on your chest, facing you. Engage your baby by getting face to face, talking, singing, play with toys. Try carrying your infant prone on you forearm with his/her belly in the palm of your hand.

An infant age 3-5 months can be placed prone on the floor in front of a mirror, or surrounded by toys to encourage propping up on arms, reaching and rolling. Once an infant has developed head control he or she can play "airplane". Hold the infant above you at the waist, facing you. Lay on your back with your legs up in the air, bent at the knees with your baby supported by your legs.

Providing your baby with opportunities for prone play is important to facilitating the development of upper body tone needed for the gross motor milestones. It should be a fun daily activity for both you and your baby. If you have any further questions, please contact your physician, physical or occupational therapist.

