

## Babies Need Tummy Time!

From crib to bouncy seat to car seat to stroller... as we tote our babies along with us through our busy days, it can be easy to forget to give them some freedom of movement. But time spent on their stomachs helps babies to strengthen their neck, back, and shoulder muscles, which is critical for the later development of pushing up, rolling over, sitting, and crawling.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that babies be placed on their backs to sleep, to prevent the occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). However,

AAP also notes the importance of supervised “tummy time” during waking hours. Tummy time sets the stage for children to be able to explore their surroundings. Infants who are left in the same position for long periods of time are at risk for developing plagiocephaly, or a flattening of the skull. Often, babies who have too little tummy time take longer to achieve developmental milestones and may exhibit delays in motor skills.

Current recommendations for tummy time range from 20 to 45 minutes each day, which can be broken down into smaller periods and increased as babies get stronger. Some tips for tummy time:

- Start early, as soon as baby returns home from the hospital, for short periods (1-2 minutes).
- Vary your baby’s position in the crib and in your arms during feedings.
- Get down on the floor at eye level and sing or talk to your baby.
- Place preferred toys in front of your baby, or engage a sibling for entertainment.
- Use a rolled up towel under your baby’s chest to make him/her more comfortable.
- Have your baby lie on your chest facing you, or cradled in a “football hold” over your forearm.
- Limit time spent in carseats, infant swings, and bouncy seats.
- Always supervise your baby during tummy time.
- Remember to place baby on his/her back to sleep.



If you have concerns about your child’s motor skill development or notice a flattening of your baby’s skull, consult your pediatrician. You may be referred to a physical or occupational therapist who can recommend stretches, exercises, and developmental activities. Please feel free to contact Island Therapy Solutions for additional resources: 340-277-4995. You can find a printable handout with this and other information at [www.islandtherapysolutions.com](http://www.islandtherapysolutions.com) .

Additional Resources:

[Tummy Time Tools from Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta](#)

[CDC’s Interactive Tools to Track Child Development](#)

[Healthychildren.org by the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)