

[Home \(/\)](#) > [Safe Infant Sleep Basics \(/safesleepbasics\)](#) > Why Babies Need Tummy Time

Babies Need Tummy Time!



Tummy time is not only an important way to prevent flat spots on your baby's head, it is also an important part of your baby's normal growth.

What Is Tummy Time?

Tummy time describes the times when you place your baby on his or her stomach while your baby is awake and someone is watching.

Tummy time is important because it:

- Helps prevent flat spots on the back of your baby's head
- Makes neck and shoulder muscles stronger so your baby can start to sit up, crawl, and walk
- Improves your baby's motor skills (using muscles to move and complete an action)


From the day¹ they come home, babies benefit from 2 to 3 tummy time sessions each day for a short period of time (3 to 5 minutes). As the baby grows and shows enjoyment of tummy time, you can lengthen the sessions. As babies grow older, more tummy time helps build strength for sitting up, rolling over, crawling, and walking.

Tummy Time Tips

These suggestions¹ can help you and your baby enjoy tummy time:



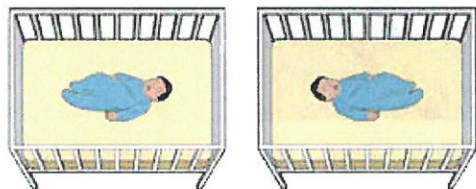
- Spread out a blanket in a clear area of the floor for tummy time.
- Try short tummy time sessions after a diaper change or after your baby wakes from a nap.
- Put a toy or toys within your baby's reach during tummy time to help your baby learn to play and interact with his or her surroundings.
- Ask someone you trust to sit in front of your baby during tummy time to encourage interaction and bonding.
- As your baby gets older, your tummy time sessions can last longer, and you can have them more often throughout the day.


Read more information and ideas about tummy time (<https://pathways.org/topics-of-development/tummy-time/>) .

Other Ways to Help Prevent Flat Spots on Your Baby's Head

In addition to tummy time, parents and caregivers can try these other ways to help prevent flat spots from forming on the back of baby's head:

- Hold your baby upright when he or she is not sleeping. This is sometimes called "cuddle time."
- Limit the amount of time your baby spends in car seats, bouncers, swings, and carriers.
- Change the direction your baby lies in the crib from one week to the next—for example, have your baby's feet point toward one end of the crib one week, and then have the feet point toward the other end of the crib the next week.



1. American Academy of Pediatrics. Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play. (January, 2017). Retrieved August 28, 2018, from <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Back-to-Sleep-Tummy-to-Play.aspx> (<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Back-to-Sleep-Tummy-to-Play.aspx>) 

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