

Tummy Time

What is tummy time?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all babies are put to sleep on their backs without any other objects in the sleeping environment to prevent the occurrence of sudden infant death syndrome and suffocation. During waking hours, some babies spend too much time on their backs. As a result, they're not strengthening much-needed muscles. To help develop all muscles and prevent flattening of their skulls, babies need to spend time in a variety of positions — including on their tummies.

What are the benefits of tummy time?

Babies who spend more time playing on their stomachs roll, crawl, pull to stand and walk earlier than those who don't have as much tummy time. That's because while they're on their stomach, babies develop the head control and upper-body strength they need to push up and learn to crawl. In addition, as they shift their weight back and forth to reach for toys, they develop balance. Tummy time also lengthens muscles on the front of the body and strengthens back muscles. It helps prevent flattening of the skull, which sometimes occurs when babies spend too much time in one position.



How do I introduce tummy time to my child?

Just remember, TUMMY to PLAY. Whenever your child is playing, modify the activity so they're on their tummy. It can take time for babies to get used to tummy time. While on their stomachs, babies see and feel different things. At first, some of these sights and sensations can make them feel uncomfortable. Babies will try to raise their heads and look around or shift their weight to reach for toys. Any time babies are looking around while lifting their heads, they're building strength and skills. If they have weak muscles in their neck, back and shoulders, these activities can

be difficult and your baby may become frustrated. Pay attention when your baby cries, but continue to provide short periods of tummy time every day. As babies become stronger, you can increase the length of tummy time.

When deciding how much tummy time is enough, aim for at least 3 times per day. Place your baby on their tummy to play to achieve 1 to 1.5 hours per day by the time they are 4 months old.

Tummy Time Fun

Make tummy time safe and fun for your baby with the following tips:

- Always supervise your baby during tummy time.
- Never place babies on blankets that can bunch up as this could restrict motion or block their airway.
- Place interesting toys on both sides of your baby.
- Raise babies by placing a rolled blanket under their chests. This makes it easier for children to lift and turn their heads.
- Lie on your back and place baby on your stomach or chest to interact with you.
- Do tummy time together, facing your baby and use toys, music, singing or soft talking.



Make An Appointment

651-290-8707

Refer a Patient

651-325-2200

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at **651-229-3890**.