



Tummy Time

For head shape and muscle strength

What is tummy time?

- Lying your baby on stomach or side when your baby is awake



Why does my baby need tummy time?

- Prevents flat spots on your baby's head (a flat area is called positional plagiocephaly);
- Helps to make the muscles in your baby's neck, back, chest and arms strong;
- Helps your baby learn to roll and crawl;
- Gives your baby a new way to look at the world.

Where should my baby have tummy time?

- On your chest or lap;
- When you carry your baby;
- On the floor;
- On a firm/ safe surface – carpeted flooring, padded mat or yoga mat.



When should my baby have tummy time?

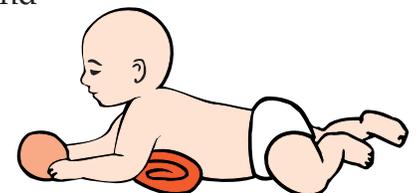
- When you are watching your baby;
- As soon as your baby comes home from hospital;
- Part of your baby's daily routine – can be done for a few minutes after every diaper change;
- Many times a day for short periods of time. Increase the time as your baby gets older.

What do I do when my baby has tummy time?

- Get down face to face and talk or sing to your baby;
- Show pictures or toys to your baby;
- Make tummy time play time;
- Rub your baby's back, arms and legs gently.

What can I do if my baby doesn't like tummy time?

- Tummy time should be done when your baby is well rested and happy;
- Be patient. Make this time as much fun as possible;
- Put a rolled towel under your baby's chest and prop his arms in front of the towel;
- Give your baby something fun and interesting to look at;
- Do not force your baby when he is upset. Comfort and try again later.

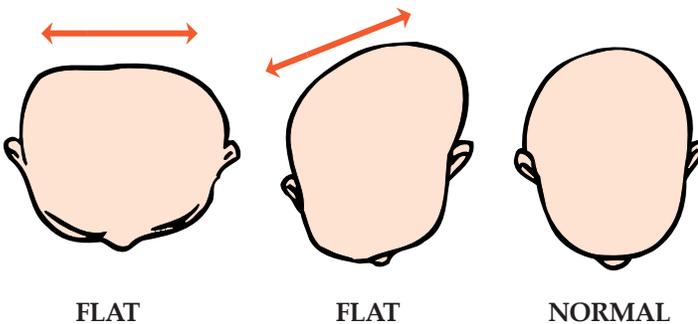


What else can I do to help my baby have a “round” head shape?

- Hold and carry your baby in different ways;
- Change the way your baby is placed in the crib every day;
- Move mobiles around the crib;
- Do not use head supports in car seats, baby swings, strollers or cribs;
- Put your baby in a car seat, swing or stroller for only a short time.

How do I know if my baby has a “round” head shape?

- Look down at the top of your baby’s head- it should be round.



What do I do if my baby gets a flat area on the head?

- Follow the ideas for tummy time;
- Position your baby so that his head does not rest on the flat area;
- Speak with your doctor or public health nurse. Your baby may need to see a physiotherapist for exercises and stretches;
- Be patient - it can take months before you can see a change.

Why can a baby get a flat area on the head?

- From baby’s position in pregnancy and the birth;
- Skull bones can flatten if the baby always rests on the same area of the head;
- From spending long periods of time in car seat, stroller or baby swing as they put pressure on the skull;
- Baby’s skulls can change shape quickly in the first few months. It usually starts to improve at 4 months of age but takes time.

Remember!

Back to sleep, tummy to play!

Where can I get more information?

- KidsHealth: www.kidshealth.org/parent/growth/sleep/positional_plagiocephaly.html
- BC Childrens’ Hospital:
http://www.cw.bc.ca/library/pdf/pamphlets/BCCH1630_PreventingFlatheadParentsGuide_2012.pdf

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Other information on parenting are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, contact:
A public health nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.ca
Parenting information is available at <http://parenting.vch.ca/>

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