

# Tummy Time

## Definition

- Tummy time is a brief period when a baby lies on their belly.
- Tummy time should only occur with adult supervision while baby is awake.

## Health Information

### Benefits of Tummy Time

- Builds stronger neck and shoulder muscles.
- Helps baby learn to lift their head.
- Helps baby learn to turn over.
- Reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) while sleeping.

### Normal Motor Development and Tummy Time

Developing motor skills is the goal of tummy time.

- **2 months.** Able to lift their head up when on their tummy.
- **4 months.** Able to hold their head steady in any position. Able to push up on their forearms when on their tummy. Some babies can even roll over from tummy to back.
- **6 months.** Able to roll over both ways. From tummy to back, and back to tummy.

### Side Effects of No Tummy Time

- Weak neck muscles make it harder to support the head.
- Delayed turning over.
- Delayed ability to sit in a highchair and self-feed.
- Back of the head becomes flat.

### Causes of No Tummy Time

- Parent hasn't been told about tummy time.
- Parent doesn't realize it's important.
- It's natural to play with young babies face to face on their backs.
- Doctors and nurses have mainly discussed back position for sleep to prevent SIDS.

## Care Advice

### 1. Key Points

- For their safety, babies need to sleep on their backs.
- To build strong neck and shoulder muscles, they also need tummy time each day.
- Here's some home care advice that should help.

### 2. Tummy Time - When to Start

- Tummy time can usually start 2 weeks after birth.
- Wait until the umbilical cord falls off. Then wait a few more days for good healing.
- Only do tummy time when your baby is well fed and happy.

### 3. **Tummy Time - What Surface**

- Choose a flat surface. It can be your lap while you sit. It can also be your chest while you're lying down.
- By 1 month of age, it can be any clean safe surface.
- If using the floor, cover it with a clean blanket, mat, or towel.
- Avoid rugs. Reason: they are dirty.

### 4. **Tummy Time - How Long**

- Start with tummy time for just 1 or 2 minutes. Reason: at first, your baby will tire quickly.
- Slowly increase the time. You want your baby to enjoy it.
- By 1 month, try for 15 total minutes each day.
- By 2 months, try for 30 total minutes each day.
- By 3 months, try for at least 1 hour each day.
- By 4 months, your baby may do tummy time on their own.

### 5. **Tummy Time - How Often**

- Start with tummy time 3 times each day.
- Gradually work up to as much as 10 times each day.
- Encourage baby to lift their head. Get their attention with toys, your face, or your voice.

### 6. **What to Expect**

- At first, baby will lift their head just enough to turn it side to side.
- After a few weeks, they will begin lifting their head higher to look ahead. This is progress.
- With your help, their motor development will stay on track.

## Call Your Doctor If

- Motor development is more than 1 month behind
- You think your child needs to be seen
- You have other questions or concerns

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

**Author:** Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

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