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# ***Tummy time: When? Why? How?***

***A family-friendly guide***



**Physiotherapy Department  
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

## ***Why is tummy time important for my baby?***

### **Their development**

Babies need to move, stretch out and explore their world. This helps them learn about themselves and their surroundings and encourages them to move.

Babies have a lot to learn in their first 18 months; skills like rolling, crawling and pulling up on furniture. Being comfortable on their tummies helps them to develop these skills. Babies who spend less time on their tummies take longer to reach these movement milestones.

### **Head shape**

It helps protect your baby's natural head shape and reduces the chances of developing "flat head syndrome".



**A baby enjoying tummy time**



## Tummy time for play

Remember that babies should **sleep on their backs** to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. During the day, you can start having tummy time for playtime.



## Tummy time on your chest

### ***What else counts as tummy time?***

Some babies don't accept tummy time very easily, and some have reflux, which makes them uncomfortable, but tummy time doesn't just mean lying flat on the floor. If your baby is leaning forwards, even just a little, then that's tummy time.

Every time you have a cuddle like the one shown above, your baby is leaning forward. This is tummy time!



### **Tummy time on your lap**

Rest baby on your lap. You can raise your knee under your baby's chest so that he/she is not lying so flat. This is tummy time!



### **Tummy time in your arms**

Carry your baby like this, leaning on your forearm. Even if they're not completely facing the floor, they're still doing tummy time.



### **Tummy time in the “burping position”**

The “burping baby” position; your baby is leaning forwards with their chest supported. This is tummy time too!



### **Tummy time supported by a towel**

A rolled-up towel or blanket under their chest may help your baby be more comfortable when you progress to a flatter position.

## ***How can I make tummy time fun?***

Use your voice and toys to keep your baby's interest, sing songs, pull funny faces, blow bubbles.

Little and often is best, for example 1 or 2 minutes at each nappy change time soon adds up and your baby will have fun on their tum.

## ***What else can I do?***



**Try to avoid long periods in a baby car seat.** Babies develop so many movement skills in their first year, they need lots of time and space to stretch out and explore.

**Make sure your baby can explore!**

If you have any questions about your baby and tummy time, please speak to your Health Visitor.

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