

When Baby is Awake, Tummy Time is Important!

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), it is important to put your baby to sleep on his back. But, when your baby is awake and someone is watching her, your baby should spend as much time as possible on her tummy.



Why is Tummy Time important?

- It helps develop the muscles that keep your baby's head up and turn her head side to side; and it builds strength throughout her back, neck, buttocks and legs.
- A baby learns how to push up on his elbows and hands to help get ready to roll, belly crawl, and sit by being on his tum
- Without enough tummy time, babies may have delays in crawling, sitting & walking.

To help your baby's body develop:

- Start your baby on tummy time from the very beginning. For the newborn, place him, when awake, on his tummy on mom or dad's chest for brief periods of time. He'll be motivated to look up towards a loving face and voice.
- Put baby on her tummy on a clean, flat surface and play with her. Put toys or a mirror where she can see or reach for them.
- If your baby has trouble picking up his head, roll up a small thin towel or receiving blanket and place it under his chest with his arms in front of it.
- Limit how much time baby spends in a swing, bouncy chair, infant seat or car seat. Babies need to be held and moved often to help them build a good sense of balance and learn about their bodies.

To help prevent baby's head from getting too flat on one side:

- Since babies turn their heads toward light, noise or activity, alternate the end of the crib you place baby's head, and alternate the arm that you use to hold, feed, or cuddle baby.
- Change the location of the mobile, or other things that baby watches, so when he's on his back, he will look in different directions
- If you are worried that your baby is getting a flat or balding spot, or if your baby is having trouble turning her head fully to either side, talk to your baby's health care provider.

For more information go to the Back To Sleep website at www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/
or call the NH Department of Health and Human Services' SIDS Program at
800-853-3345, ext. 4536 (NH) or 603-271-4536

For more Fact Sheets please go to www.ParentHelpNH.org



Children's Hospital at Dartmouth, Injury Prevention Center, NH Department of Health and Human Services,
NH Department of Education, NH Pediatric Society, SAFE KIDS NH & Partnership for a DrugFreeNH.org