

## What can we expect when we place babies on their tummies?

### 0-1 months:

Can turn head in order to breathe.



### 2-3 months:

Can stretch arms and legs more and begin to lift their heads.

### 4-5 months:

Can prop on their elbows and lift their head.

### 6-7 months:

Can reach out for toys in play; can roll from back to tummy and tummy to back alone.

## Precautions

- You should always supervise your baby's tummy time. If she can't control her head yet, support her in a safe and comfortable position.
- You should use a clean, firm surface like a playpen mat for tummy time on the floor. Remove pillows, quilts, comforters, sheep skins, pillow-like toys and other soft products from the crib.<sup>3</sup>
- Be sure your baby is safe. Don't use a surface that she can roll off and hurt herself.

- Whenever possible, carry your baby or use a soft carrier instead of using a firm infant seat.
- Infant seats can be used for brief periods, such as when you are in the kitchen, so that your baby can be by you. Infant seats should not be placed on tables or other elevated surfaces. Children should not be left unattended while in an infant seat.
- Infant car seats should be used for transportation. They should not be used for positioning at other times of the day. Instead, use this time for your baby to play on her tummy.
- Playpens are recommended for alternative time when you need your baby to be safe and contained. Tummy time can occur when your baby is in the playpen. If your baby gets tired and falls asleep, gently roll her to her back.

*Developed Spring 2004, Revised Fall 2008*



If you have a concern about your child or need more information, contact Early ACCESS through Keystone AEA at 1-800-632-5918.  
<http://www.aea1.k12.ia.us/eaccess/eaccesschild.html>

*This brochure was adapted with permission from Early ACCESS Regions 1 and 6. If you have any questions please contact the Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy Department at your Local Area Education Agency or contact Early ACCESS Iowa at: 1-888-425-4371*

## Back to Sleep & Tummy to Play



In 1992, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that all babies sleep on their back to decrease the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). This has decreased the incidence of SIDS by nearly 50 percent in the U.S.

Although sleeping on their backs is recommended for all healthy babies, playing on the tummy during waking hours is recommended and safe.

# Benefits of Tummy Time...

- Promotes motor performance. Infants who sleep on their back but are placed on their tummy when awake have more advanced motor development than infants who do not play on their stomachs. (Monson et al., 2003)<sup>1</sup>
- Encourages motor development by strengthening muscles for head control, trunk control, and playing with toys.
- Increases your cuddle time and contact with your baby. It also prevents constant pressure on the back of your baby's head.
- Gives your baby a different visual perspective of the world.
- Benefits are increased when you alternate tummy time with play on her side.



<sup>1</sup> & <sup>2</sup> Monson RM, Deits, J. & Kartin D. The Relationship between awake positioning and motor performance among infants who sleep supine. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 15: 196-203, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, [www.cpsp.gov](http://www.cpsp.gov)

## Tummy Time Should be Fun!

- Tummy time is anytime you carry or play with your baby while he is on his stomach.
- Placing your baby on your stomach while you lean back is tummy time. Your faces are close together which encourages play and social interaction with your baby.
- Place your baby on her stomach while on your lap or over your leg. Support her head if she can't do it herself. Infants benefit from a variety of positions for play.
- Lie down on your stomach on the floor head-to-head with your baby. You can look at his and he can see you. Talk, sing and play games.
- Provide interesting toys to stimulate your baby while on her tummy. If your baby doesn't like being on her tummy, keeping her entertained will help. As muscles get stronger, she will be able to lift her head and will begin to enjoy it more.
- As children get older, they can use "Tummy Time" for increased upper body strength and coordination preparation for hands and knees crawling.



## Consequences of NO Tummy Time

- The muscles needed for motor development may be too weak and delay development for rolling stomach to back, using her hands for support in sitting, crawling on hands and knees and pulling to stand. (Monson et al., 2003)<sup>2</sup>
- The combination of back sleeping and time in an infant seat or car seat puts pressure on the back of your baby's head and may lead to a flat spot on one or both sides.

