

Physiotherapy-

Tummy Time with your baby

Tummy time is an important activity to promote a baby's development and should become part of each baby's daily routine.

This leaflet has been designed to help you understand why tummy time is important for your baby. It provides you with advice and some tips on how to get the best out of tummy time with your baby.

Why do babies need tummy time?

Babies are being placed on their backs for most of the day and spending less time on their tummies. This can cause:

- a delay in achieving movement skills
- flattening of the side or back of the head

What do babies do on their tummies?

- Develop better head control and stronger neck, shoulder, back and arm muscles.
- Move from side to side which in turn helps them learn how to reach and crawl.
- Develop better balance and coordination.
- Enhance vision and hand-eye coordination.

Important points to remember:

- **Make sure your baby is awake and alert and is never left alone on his/her tummy.**
- **Always place your baby on a firm, flat surface. Avoid beanbags or very padded furniture.**
- **It is important to begin tummy time from birth.**
- **It is recommended for babies to have tummy time about 3 times per day for 3-5 minutes and slowly build up to longer sessions.**

Tummy time for fun!!!

- A good time for tummy time is when your baby wakes up or after a nappy change.
- Your baby may enjoy a massage after a bath while he/she lies on his/her tummy.
- You can start by placing the newborn baby on your chest while you are lying back or sitting reclined.
- Not all babies like tummy time at first and may cry.
- Place mirrors, brightly coloured objects and musical or moving toys nearby to encourage your baby to lift their head.
- As your baby grows older (approximately 6 months), try placing toys just out of reach and encourage your baby to reach for them. This helps him/ her to strengthen the muscles needed for rolling over.

Back to sleep & tummy time to play:

ALWAYS PLACE YOUR BABY TO SLEEP ON THEIR BACK-EVEN FOR NAPS.

This is very important in reducing the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Tips for new babies:

- * Alternate which end of the cot you place your baby's head
- * Babies will naturally turn towards the light or to mobiles in the room. This changes the area of pressure on your babies head.
- * You can also put your baby's head on alternate sides each night.

Be Aware:

Too much time in equipment e.g. bouncers, car seats, gives your baby limited visual stimulation and less opportunities for exploring. Instead let your baby have some tummy time on the floor and enjoy moving freely themselves!

If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact your local Physiotherapy Department.

Cavan General Hospital 049 4376208
Monaghan General Hospital 047 38849

Or

Visit the website of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists:
www.iscp.ie