

Tummy Time

For head shape and muscle strength

What is tummy time?

- Lying your baby on stomach or side when the baby is awake.

Why does my baby need tummy time?

- Stops your baby from getting a flat area on the head (a flat area is called positional plagiocephaly).
- Helps to make muscles in your baby's neck, back, chest and arms strong.
- Helps your baby learn to roll and crawl.
- Gives your baby a new way to look at the world.

Where should my baby have tummy time?

- On your chest.
- On the floor.
- On your lap.
- On a firm/safe surface.

When should my baby have tummy time?

- Many times during the day when baby is awake.
- For short periods of time.
- When you are watching your baby.

What do I do when my baby has tummy time?

- Get down and talk or sing to your baby.
- Show pictures or toys to your baby.
- Rub your baby's back, arms and legs gently.

What else can I do to help my baby have a "round" head shape?

- Hold and carry your baby in different ways.
- Change the way your baby is placed in the crib every day.
- Move mobiles around on the crib.
- Do not use head supports in car seats, cuddle seats, baby swings, strollers or cribs.
- Put your baby in a car seat, swing or stroller for only a short time.

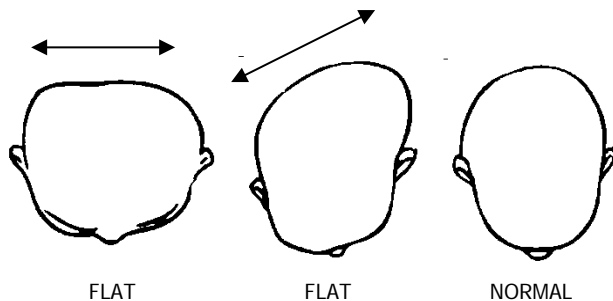
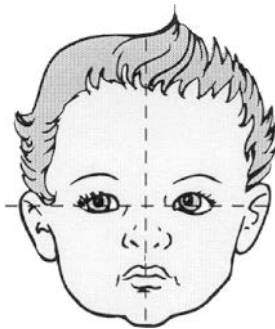
What can I do if my baby doesn't like tummy time?

- Be patient. Make this time as much fun as you can.
- Keep trying. It will get easier for both of you.
- Put a rolled up towel under your baby's chest.



How do I know if my baby has a "round" head shape?

- Eyes are at the same height.
- Ears are at the same height.
- Look down at the top of your baby's head – it should be round.



Why can a baby get a flat area on the head?

- From the baby's position in pregnancy and the birth.
- Babies' skulls can change shape until one year of age.
- Skull bones can flatten if the baby always rests on the same area of the head.

Will a flat area on the head hurt my baby's brain?

- Usually not.

Where can I get more information?

- Your local health unit or doctor.
- www.cheo.on.ca
- www.cranialtech.com

What do I do if my baby gets a flat area on the head?

- Follow the ideas for tummy time.
- Move your baby so that its head does not rest on the flat area.
- Speak with your doctor or public health nurse.
- Be patient – it can take months before you see a change.
- Hold/carry your baby more often.

REMEMBER!
A baby should sleep on its back on a firm surface.

Information for this pamphlet was provided by Vancouver Coastal Health

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