

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends “Back to Sleep and Tummy to Play<sup>1</sup>” for the physical development and general health and well-being of your baby. Tummy time and repositioning efforts may also improve the overall shape of your baby’s head while they stretch, learn to explore, and discover their environments. The most important points to remember is that Tummy Time activities are only and always done when the baby is **awake** and **supervised** by caregivers.

### Benefits of Tummy Time

- ★ Bone development
- ★ Sensory integration
- ★ Improve muscle strength
- ★ Stimulate muscles of the neck, back and shoulders
- ★ Visual stimulation
- ★ Cognitive development
- ★ Builds the foundation for other movements and activities



# Tummy Time



star  band<sup>®</sup>  
When nature needs a nudge.™

*Tummy Time begins the day baby comes home from the hospital!*



Keep in mind that some babies enjoy Tummy Time and many do not, especially in the early days. There's nothing wrong with your child if they fuss a bit and are resistant to this new position.

Avoid Tummy Time immediately after eating and when the baby is already distressed. Be sure to educate other family members and caregivers about the importance of Tummy Time and the need for the infant to be awake and supervised.



Take a look at your baby's head from all angles, but especially from the top view. It is not uncommon to find some areas of excessive flattening or rounding, and it is not uncommon for your baby's overall head shape to change during the first four months after birth.

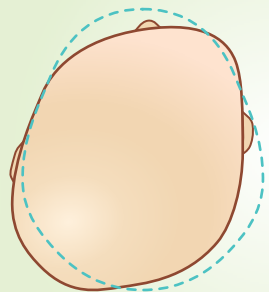
If you notice any flattened areas on your baby's head like the ones shown here, it's a good idea to take weekly photos and discuss any changes with your pediatrician.

## First two weeks activities

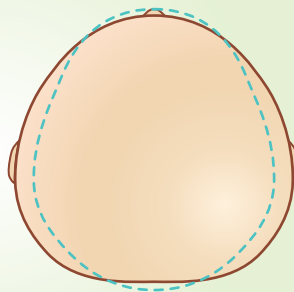
- ★ Begin with 3 to 5 minutes, several times each day.
  - Gradually increase amount of time and frequency
- ★ Allow baby to spend a few minutes on their tummy after each diaper change.
- ★ Find creative ways to carry and hold your baby—tummy to your chest, football hold, tummy on your lap, etc.
- ★ Always encourage eye contact to enhance head control.

## Up to two months activities

- ★ Encourage baby to lift and turn their head with toys, distractions and eye contact.
- ★ Introduce more time spent on the floor with a variety of activities.
- ★ Take note of how your baby turns their head to each side. If the neck muscles seem especially weak or imbalanced, ask your pediatrician about a referral to a pediatric physical therapist.
- ★ The overall head shape should be much improved from the first week after birth. If you notice any flattened areas, be sure to discuss with your pediatrician at the next visit.
- ★ Continue Tummy Time after each diaper change.



Plagiocephaly



Brachycephaly



Your pediatrician will help direct the best care for your baby by referring you to a pediatric physical therapist, cranial orthotist or craniofacial specialist as needed. Many infants receive treatments to stretch and strengthen the neck while also using a headband to reshape the head. Your medical care team will work together to answer all your questions and make these treatments as easy as possible for you and your child.

Tummy Time and repositioning efforts may have a significant impact on the overall head shape but keep in mind that some little heads are just resistant to change without some focused encouragement, such as a STARband. The STARband is a medical device that is specifically designed to model your baby's head into a more symmetrical and proportional shape as it grows. More information about the STARband® and STARband cranial orthotists can be found at [www.starbandkids.com](http://www.starbandkids.com).



## Up to three months activities

- ★ Baby's head control is greatly improved, and they will try to get their arms bent under their trunk to help push up and look around.
- ★ The overall head shape should be much improved from the first week after birth. If flattened areas are still present, ask your pediatrician for a referral to a cranial specialist/orthotist for a head shape assessment.
- ★ Continue Tummy Time after each diaper change.



## Up to four months activities

- ★ Head control continues to improve—the head should be held high and centered.
- ★ The overall head shape should continue to improve. If flattened areas are still present, ask your pediatrician for a referral to a cranial specialist/orthotist for a head shape assessment.
- ★ Continue Tummy Time after each diaper change.



Remember that Tummy Time should be a fun experience that allows you to interact and bond with your baby. Find ways to make this activity more enjoyable by singing songs, playing with toys and rattles, encouraging movement, making eye contact and remember . . . there's simply no such thing as too much Tummy Time!