

Tummy Time

What is tummy time?

- Placing your baby on their stomach or side when baby is awake.

Why does my baby need tummy time?

- Stops your baby from getting a flat spot on the head (a flat area is called positional plagiocephaly).
- Helps to make muscles strong in your baby's neck, back, chest and arms.
- 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 or lap.
- On the floor.
- On a firm surface that is safe for baby e.g. an exercise or yoga mat.
- Choose the options that work best for you.

When should my baby have tummy time?

- As soon as your baby is born.
- When your baby is awake and happy.
- When you are watching your baby.
- Many times during the day.

What do I do when my baby has tummy time?

- Get down to baby's level.
- Talk or sing to your baby.
- Show brightly colored pictures or toys to your baby.
- Play peek-a-boo with your baby.

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

- Switch the end where your baby's head is in the crib each day. This encourages your baby to turn his or her head a different way to look at people or things in the room.
- 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.

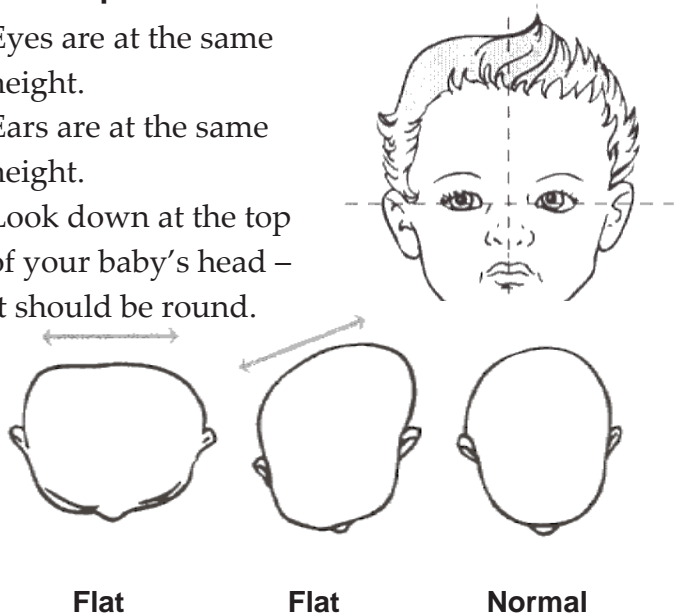
What can I do if my baby doesn't like tummy time?

- Be patient.
- Your baby may be fussy and may need your help to learn to like tummy time.
- Make this time as much fun as you can.
- You can put a rolled up towel under your baby's chest and prop his arms in front of the towel, once your baby can hold his head up.

Tummy Time - *continued*

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.



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

- Follow the tips for tummy time.
- Place your baby so that his 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.

Remember!
**A baby should sleep on their back
on a firm surface**

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

- From baby’s position in pregnancy and birth.
- From spending long periods of time in a stroller, car seat, or baby swing.
- Skull bones can flatten if the baby always rests on the same area on the head.
- Babies’ skulls change shape the most in the first year of life.

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

- Usually not.
- A small amount of head flattening will resolve by itself.

Where can I get more information?

Call your local Public Health Unit, Doctor, or Health Link BC at 811.

Online Resources

Fraser Health www.fraserhealth.ca
Search ‘growth and development’.

Healthy Families BC www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca
Search ‘flat spots’.
Search ‘tummy time’.

HealthLinkBC www.healthlinkbc.ca
Search ‘flattened head’.

BC Children’s Hospital www.bcchildrens.ca
View ‘A-Z Health Pamphlets’.
Click on letter ‘P’ to find ‘Plagiocephaly’. Select ‘Preventing and Treating Your Baby’s Flat Head’.

Adapted with permission from Vancouver Coastal Health

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.