

Is your Physiotherapist Chartered?



## 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.



## Why tummy time?

**As it is recommended that babies sleep on their backs they are spending less time on their tummies.**

**This may cause:**

- a delay in babies acquiring movement skills or
- flattening of the side or the back of the head.

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## What do babies do on their tummies?

- They achieve better head control and stronger muscles in their necks, shoulders, arms and backs.
- Babies move from side to side on their tummies which helps them learn how to reach and crawl.
- They develop better balance and co-ordination.
- Vision and hand-eye co-ordination are enhanced.



## **Important to remember**

- Make sure your baby is awake and is never left alone on his/her tummy.**
- Always place your baby on a firm, flat surface. Avoid bean bags or very padded furniture.**
- It is important to begin tummy time from birth.**
- It is recommended for babies to have tummy time about three 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 the 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 new born baby on your chest while you are lying on your back or sitting reclined. Hold the baby facing you. This is a great way to play with the baby while they try to lift their head to see your face.

Not all babies like going on their tummy at first and may cry.

Place mirrors, brightly coloured objects and musical or moving toys nearby to encourage baby to lift their head.

As your baby grows older (*approx. 6 months*) try placing favourite toys just out of reach and encourage the baby to reach for them. This helps him/her strengthen the muscles needed for rolling over.



## Back to sleep & tummy to play

***Always place a baby to sleep on their back – even for naps.***

This is very important in reducing the incidence of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome**. However, sleeping on the back may lead to Positional Plagiocephaly (Flat Head Syndrome).

A newborn baby finds it difficult to keep their head in midline when lying on their back, so the head will tend to fall to one side or the other. If the baby sleeps with the head predominantly to one side, e.g. facing toward you at night, that side of the head may become flattened. To prevent this you will need to alternate your baby's head position regularly.

When placing your baby down to sleep, position the head first (either to right or left) so that the cheek/ear rests on the mattress, then gently allow the baby's body to roll completely onto its back. Alternate the side of the head each time you put the baby down so that an equal amount of time is spent facing right and left. If you like your baby to be facing towards you, alternate which end of the cot you place the baby's head.

## Playtime

Too much time in equipment such as swings, bouncer seats and car seats gives babies limited visual stimulation and less opportunities for exploring. Instead place your baby on his/her tummy on a mat on the floor to allow them to move freely themselves.



## Getting Help

When you choose a Chartered Physiotherapist in Paediatrics you can have the peace of mind in knowing that you are being treated by a Physiotherapist who has a university degree qualification and is committed to the highest standards of ethical and clinical excellence.

## General Information

### **Chartered Physiotherapists in Paediatrics (CPP)**

work in hospitals and in the community where treatment is covered under the public health service. They also work in private practice and can be contacted through the Professional Body, the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP), or through the Golden Pages.

Chartered Physiotherapy fees can be claimed back through VHI, QUINN-healthcare and Aviva Health. Tax relief may be claimed by filling in the Med1 form available from the Revenue Commissioners at [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)



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