

## FLOOR TIME

A well-rounded floor time routine is very important for your baby's overall motor development. It is important for your baby to spend time playing on their tummy, side and back. By 3-4 months, many babies are also ready to start introducing sitting with your support.

“Tummy time” will help your baby:

- Develop control of their head
- Strengthen the muscles in their upper body
- Prevent flathead
- Assist in developing other motor skills, such as rolling, sitting, crawling, etc.

Babies should play on their tummy **several times a day**. By 3 months of age, babies should be encouraged to play on their tummies for a least 30 minutes spread throughout the day while awake.

Some helpful tips include:

- Encourage tummy time after naps when baby is rested, alert and ready to play.
- Try shorter periods of time more often and allow your baby to take breaks as needed.
- Try placing a small, rolled towel under the baby's chest/armpits or propped up on a pillow.



- Try applying a downward pressure at their bum towards their feet.
- Get down on the floor and face your baby during tummy time. Babies love face-to-face interactions!

These tips will provide some assistance to the baby until they gain strength/tolerance to tummy time.

Don't forget, tummy time on your chest, over your lap or in your arms counts!



### Why should my baby play on their back?

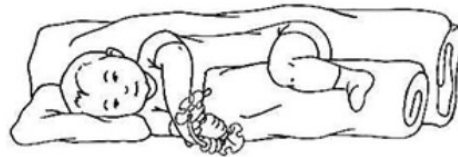
Playing with a baby lying on its back is important for their development, especially to build core strength and hand-eye coordination.

#### Some helpful tips include:

- Presenting a toy at midline (at the centre of their body at eye level, about 20-30 cm away) encourages visual tracking. Move the toy side to side for baby to follow with their gaze. Placing a baby on a slight incline can assist with this initially, if needed.
- Presenting a toy at midline at chest level encourages a baby to bring their hands together.
- Encourage bringing hands to knees/feet to help strengthen the core and is a prerequisite for rolling. A small folded towel can be placed under the baby's bottom initially, if needed.

### Why should my baby play in side-lying?

- This position allows for a natural break from playing on their tummy. Side-lying can start from day one and is beneficial to unweight the back of the head to prevent flatness and also promotes the ability to bring hands together for midline play.



- To keep your baby in a side lying position, put a firm rolled up towel or blanket behind their back. Keeping your baby’s body bent/flexed (not perfectly straight) can also help maintain the position.

### How do I play with my baby in supported sitting?

- Supported sitting is beneficial once babies have enough head control. Begin on a firm surface, ensuring the baby has a wide base of support (bring their bottom back to get their weight over their sit bones).
- Start by providing support to the upper trunk under the armpits and gradually move your hands down as they progress their sitting ability.
- Encourage baby to keep their head up in this position. This can be done using a mirror, having someone else in front of the baby or turning them to face you when playing.

### What about baby equipment?

It is recommended to minimize time spent in baby equipment such as car seats, bouncy seats and exersaucers. Excessive time in these devices inhibits movement and places babies at higher risk for a variety of issues, such as flat head, decreased strength, delayed motor milestones, altered hip development and walking abnormalities. The use of Jumperoos or Jolly Jumpers are not typically recommended.

### **Have fun while playing with your baby in various positions throughout the day!**

If you have any questions, please consult your Health Care Professional.