

5 Tips for Positioning and Play to Help your Newborn Baby's Posture and Movement Development

Follow these tips from the time your baby is born unless otherwise directed by baby's primary care provider.

CENTER BABY'S HEAD AND BODY

1



Center your baby's head and body while in the car seat, infant positioning equipment, and when playing with your baby.

ENCOURAGE BABY TO LOOK BOTH WAYS

2



Alternate holding baby on your left and right arm while breast or bottle feeding.

Put interesting infant toys on both sides of your baby.

BACK TO SLEEP

3



Your baby should always sleep on their back. Turn your baby's head to the opposite side each night to prevent a flat spot from developing on one side.

You may also alternate which side is the "head of the bed" when placing baby in crib each night. This encourages your baby turn to each side to see out of the crib.

TUMMY TO PLAY WHILE AWAKE & SUPERVISED

4



Daily supervised awake tummy time is recommended at birth 2-3 times per day for 3-5 minutes.

Gradually increase to 15-30 minutes per day by 7 weeks of age

Increase to at least 60 minutes of tummy time by 6 months of age.

During the first 6 months, supervised tummy time while awake helps your baby's motor development.

At least 3 times each day, place your baby on his/her tummy to play.

5

MINIMIZE TIME IN “CONTAINERS”



Limit baby's time in infant positioning equipment (such as car seats and strollers) to only the time your baby is being transported.

Minimize the time your infant spends in other infant positioning equipment (such as infant swings, bouncy seats, and infant/toddler rockers).



DO:

1. Hold your baby in your arms or using a sling instead of a container.
2. Allow baby to play freely in a playpen or on a blanket on the floor with adult supervision.
3. Remember tummy time to play!

American Physical Therapy Association ChoosePT "Container Baby Syndrome". Available at: www.choosept.com/symptomsconditionsdetail/physical-therapy-guide-to-container-baby-syndrome

Congenital Muscular Torticollis (CMT) is neck tightness or weakness that can happen in infants. It causes the child to turn their head to one direction and tilt it to the other side.

Screen your child for CMT using this handout: <https://pediatricapta.org/clinical-practice-guidelines/Congenital-Muscular-Torticollis.cfm>



If you think your child might have CMT, it is important to discuss this with your child's primary care provider and request a referral to physical therapy immediately. The earlier that children with CMT start physical therapy the more quickly the CMT will resolve.

For More Information

- [Benefits of Tummy Time | Safe to Sleep® \(nih.gov\)](#)
- <https://pathways.org/watch/five-essential-tummy-time-moves-how-to-do-tummy-time/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>
- [APTA Pediatrics CMT Clinical Practice Guideline | pediatricapta.org/clinical-practice-guidelines](#)
- [Find a PT: https://www.choosept.com/find-a-pt](#)

APTA - Congenital Muscular Torticollis



Contact your local PT:
