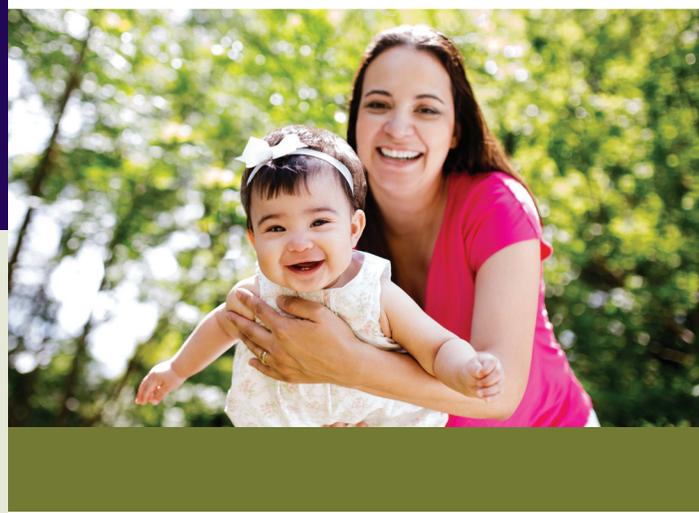


## What can I expect when I place my baby on his/her tummy?

There are variations in the way babies acquire gross motor skills but generally the following may be expected:

- **0-1 Months:** The infant rests with head to one side and body tucked up in the fetal position. They can lift their head slightly to turn mouth and nose to the side.
- **2-3 Months:** With regular experience on their stomachs, babies will be more comfortable in this position. They will stretch out arms and legs more and begin lifting their head slightly.
- **4-5 Months:** By the fourth month, your child will be able to fully lift his/her head. By the end of the fifth month, this skill should be mastered, and your child may even be able to push up on extended arms and reach.
- **6-7 Months:** Your child will be very comfortable playing on his/her stomach. They can easily reach and interact with objects in this position. They will be able to roll on and off their tummy on their own and may begin belly crawling.
- **8-10 Months:** Your child will use crawling on hands and knees as their main form of mobility. He or she will move easily in and out of sitting.
- **10-18 Months:** As your child is learning to walk, they will continue to use crawling for floor play and on stairs.



Curative New Berlin Therapies has long been the provider of choice with experts in all areas of pediatric and adult physical, occupational and speech/language & oral motor therapies – also specializing in sports rehabilitation and post-concussion therapy.

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# Back to Sleep Tummy to Play

A Caregiver's Guide for Positioning Infants



**Curative Care**  
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Dedicated to Helping People Thrive

## Babies should sleep on their backs.



In 1992 the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that all healthy infants should be positioned on their backs when sleeping to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). As the “Back to Sleep” message spreads, the number of babies who die from SIDS has decreased significantly.

- **Development of gross motor skills such as rolling and crawling.**
  - These activities promote movement and also help babies develop a sense of time, distance and space.
- **The opportunity for deep pressure and touch sensations in the forearm and hand.**
  - These important pressure experiences prepare baby to effectively manipulate toys.
- **Reduced risk of an asymmetrical head shape.**
  - Different positions for sleep and play limit plagiocephaly (flattening of a portion of the head).

## Make ‘tummy time’ fun



- **Very young infants enjoy close contact, singing and brightly-colored toys.**
  - They should be placed on a firm, yet soft surface with their head to one side. Encourage them to lift their head.
  - They do well lying on their tummy on a caregiver’s lap or chest.
  - If fussy, try ‘tummy time’ for short periods of time while holding them or gently rocking them.
- **Infants who are able to lift and control their head enjoy brightly-colored toys, or a mirror placed in front of them.**
- **Older infants (4-6 months) enjoy looking at, and reaching for toys. Try games, fun faces, songs and sounds to interact with them.**

## How should my baby be positioned during waking hours?

Your child should experience a wide variety of positions throughout the day.



- Young infants need ‘tummy time’ at least three times daily. They also enjoy lying on their side. Be sure to stay close and alternate sides.
- Carry your infant at your shoulder (alternating sides), cuddled in your arms or facing outward at their environment.
- Equipment such as infant seats, bouncing recliners and swings should only be used for short periods of time. While convenient, they often promote prolonged periods in one position. Consider using a wearable infant carrier or sling. *(As pictured above.)*
- Standing supports like ‘exer-saucers’ can help give your child the experience of standing. However, it is important to wait until they have developed head and body control, have their feet on the floor and are using their legs actively for support. Wheeled walkers are not recommended because they can tip on uneven surfaces and promote an unnatural walking pattern.

## Babies should play on their tummies.

Positioning babies on their tummy to play, while they are awake, is recommended for healthy infant development. The benefits of ‘tummy time’ include:

- **The opportunity to strengthen important back, neck, shoulder and arm muscles.**
  - This helps develop good posture and encourages transitional movements and interaction with toys.
  - Research reveals that infants who are not placed on their stomachs for play learn to sit later than those who experience ‘tummy time.’
- **Visual stimulation.**
  - As baby looks up from this position, eye contact and interaction with the world around them promotes visual skill and development.