

Aeroflow *Breastpumps*

Better Than Tummy Time

A newborn's neck, back, and shoulder muscles are underdeveloped at birth. As they grow, they will gain the strength to be able to hold up their head on their own and not need to be supported. There are ways besides the traditional “tummy time” that can help your baby develop upper body strength. Spending adequate time being held can also strengthen your newborn’s core muscles to prevent complications such as plagiocephaly (flat head syndrome) or torticollis (twisted neck) as well as ensure they are meeting their developmental milestones.

What is Tummy Time?

“Tummy Time” is when your baby spends time on their belly to practice lifting and stretching their upper body muscles. Doctors will recommend that you start tummy time with your baby right away in short durations and work up to a total of one hour spread throughout the day. Tummy time can be done on a soft, flat surface or an adult’s chest. If your baby is on the floor, stay nearby and move them to a safe sleep environment on their back if they fall asleep. As your baby gets older, tummy time can be done on a play mat with hanging toys to motivate reaching and turning.

Tummy time can also be done on a parent’s lap, side lying, or propped up with a pillow or blanket on their chest. Sometimes, babies do not enjoy spending time on their bellies and are happier being held instead. Holding your baby will still offer significant strengthening and progress in all important areas for healthy growth.

What is Better than Tummy Time?

Simply carrying your baby or wearing them in a sling or carrier is better than tummy time because it’s a more natural way of strengthening muscles and encourages emotional connection. Babywearing can be done in combination with tummy time and has many of the same benefits for your baby’s development plus more:

- Oral Skills
- Sensory Development
- Postural and Head control
- Environment Exploration

- Gastrointestinal Issues
- Neurological Development
- Muscle Strengthening
- Longer Breastfeeding Duration
- Emotional Development
- Intellectual Development

Human babies are meant to be held and feel the warmth of their mother's skin; an irreplaceable benefit your baby will receive by being carried instead of spending time on their belly. Babywearing simplifies life by making it convenient to be hands-free while holding your baby and satisfies their biological desire to want constant contact. Babywearing can replace tummy time positionings and offers a more simplistic and natural approach to your baby's healthy growth development.

Another major benefit of holding your baby instead of Tummy Time is the social and communication exposure your baby will encounter. Babies that are worn or held by their parents frequently are receiving the stimulation needed to develop language and speech. In addition complications such as plagiocephaly (flat head syndrome) or torticollis (twisted neck) that require treatment to correct are highly avoidable by holding your baby, which naturally exercises their core muscles. As your baby gets older, a toy can be strapped to the side of your sling or carrier to encourage reaching and grasping. It's more pleasurable for your baby to be worn and easier for you to go about your day without having to set time aside to be home for tummy time.

Most importantly, follow your baby's cues. As your baby grows, there may be times they prefer to be on the floor to explore which will develop different gross motor skills that will lead to crawling, standing, and walking. Let your baby lead and be in tune with how they prefer to engage the world around them.

Discuss any questions or concerns you may have about your baby's growth and development with your doctor. For additional support, connect with a local babywearing group or contact an Aeroflow Lactation Consultant for evidence-based support and resources.

What If I Have Questions?

If you are interested in learning more, these AeroFlow classes expand on some of the topics discussed above:

- Babycare for the Breastfed Baby
- Babywearing and Breastfeeding

To register for these classes, log into your portal or click [here](#).

Want More Info?

For a directory of AeroFlow's other Care Guides offering information on pregnancy, baby care, and more, browse our comprehensive list of titles:

<https://www.hersourcehealth.com/aeroflow-care-guides/>

Sources

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