

For healthy development your baby should be involved in active play every day. As your baby grows older, they may be awake for longer and have more time to spend in active play. There are lots of ways you can help your baby to play and be active.

An important part of active play for newborn babies is spending short periods of time on their tummy EVERY DAY.

Carrying in different ways



Roll your baby onto their tummy.



Hold them around their tummy. Pick up.



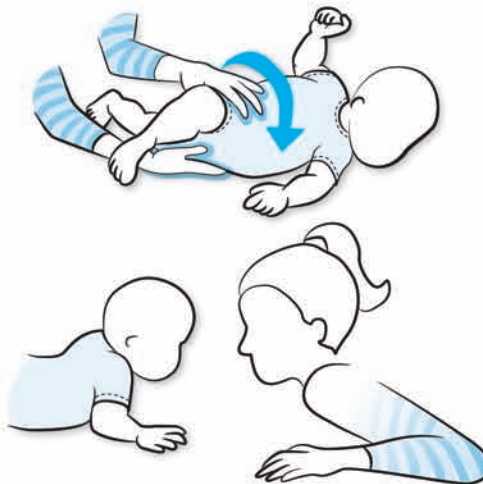
Place them face down along your forearm to carry.

Try and do this each time you pick up your child (e.g. following nappy changes or sleeping).

Playtime on the floor



- Lay your baby on their side with some toys nearby.
- Place a rolled up towel behind them as support.
- Stay near and help them play.



- Roll your baby onto their tummy.
- Put toys where they can see and reach for them e.g. a small rattle with a handle, a soft doll or a board book with pictures.
- Get down low and look at your baby's face.



- Let your baby kick and move freely when they are playing on their back.
- Talk, sing songs or blow raspberries on their feet.

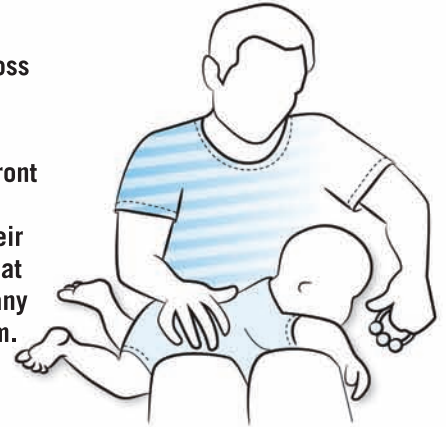


Playtime on your lap

- Sit your baby in your lap and gently rock backwards and forwards or side to side to help them practice their balance.
- This is fun to do while singing or to music.



- Lay your baby across your lap when you are sitting down.
- Hold a toy out in front so your baby can work to control their head as they look at the toy and the many things around them.



Lying on your chest



- Some babies fuss or start to cry when they are put onto their tummy. This is because they are not use to the position, and it can be hard work for them.
- If your baby isn't happy on the floor, lay them on your chest. They will enjoy being close to you and looking into your face while still being on their tummy.

Helpful hints for tummy play

- If your baby suffers with reflux, they may find lying on the floor is unsettling. Laying them on your chest or across your lap on a pillow may be more comfortable for them to play.
- Give your baby toys and objects that have different textures or shapes for their little fingers to explore. Check toys regularly as parts can come loose and choke a baby.
- Give your baby toys that make gentle sounds such as a rattle. Noises during play help with brain development and movement.
- Allow your baby plenty of time to play with toys they have worked hard to get.
- Your baby may start to play for short periods on their own but still needs you close by to help them explore and try out new activities safely.
- You are the most important thing in your baby's life. Your baby will enjoy spending time with you and playing.

REMEMBER, always stay with your baby when they are on their tummy.

REMEMBER:

- There is a link between babies sleeping on their tummies and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- If your baby falls asleep on their tummy, turn them over immediately to sleep on their back.

For further information about SIDS, talk to your doctor or Child and Family Health Nurse at your local Community Health Centre or visit www.sidsandkids.org