

## Do you have any of these questions?

#1

“Must my baby always be placed on her back?”

#2

“How soon should I begin to let my baby play on his tummy?”

#3

“How much time should my baby spend on his tummy each day?”

#4

“My baby is getting a flat spot on her head. What can I do?”

#5

“My baby is not rolling over or crawling, but my friend’s baby is. What can I do?”

## Why place your infant in a variety of positions?

In 1994, pediatricians started advocating that babies sleep on their backs to avoid the possibility of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome**. Indeed fewer babies have died from **SIDS** since babies have begun to sleep routinely on their backs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommend that babies play on their tummies. Time on the tummy helps babies develop the muscle strength to hold the head up and helps the eyes to work together. Babies need to push with their hands against a firm surface to help develop the strength to manipulate toys and crayons later.

Recent research suggests that babies who sleep on their backs and only play on their backs do not acquire the normal baby skills of rolling over and crawling as quickly as babies who spend floor time on their tummies every day. In addition, a variety of positions will help to avoid problems such as neck muscle tightness and flat spots on the head.

**Responsible Health**  
513-829-4755

©2003 - Judy Jennings & Barbara Sarbaugh  
<http://www.fit-baby.com>

## Baby Development Information



**JUDY JENNINGS, MA, PT**

**BARB SARBAUGH, MA, OTR/L**

# Answers to your Questions

#1

Your pediatrician will be able to explain that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation to place a new baby on the back is for SLEEPING babies. It is important to follow the guidelines of your physician about the optimal sleep position for your new baby.



#2

It is also important to understand that when AWAKE and supervised, babies need to play on their tummies. A good time for this play is after each diapering change or after each nap for at least 1-2 minutes beginning their first day home.



#3

The amount of Tummy Time will increase as the baby gets older and his neck gets stronger. Babies who have developed stamina on the tummy enjoy tummy play for several minutes many times a day. Tummy Time prepares the baby to scoot on his belly and later crawl on his hands and knees.

If he does not like the tummy position, place a small rolled towel under his chest to help him free his hands to reach for toys. Build stamina a little at a time until your baby enjoys his tummy position.



#4

Babies with poor head control are at risk of developing flat spots on the head and neck muscles shortened to one side. Vary the positions you use when the baby is awake. Limit the amount of time in infant seats, swings, and exersaucers. Plan regular times for floor play both on the tummy and the back. Babies fed with bottles should be changed from side to side as a breast fed baby would be.



#5

When your baby is playing on her tummy place a circle of toys around her, just out of reach. Reaching to the side will help her to roll over. Reaching forward will help her to scoot on her belly. Bringing her toes to her mouth and playing with her feet, will help her learn to roll from her back to her tummy.