

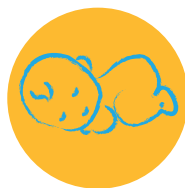


### Important!

**Never leave your baby unsupervised** when he/she is on his/her tummy.

**Never let him/her sleep** in this position.

See the HSE guidelines for safe sleep:  
<http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/publichealth/publichealthdepts/resources/safesleep.pdf>



And remember not to worry if your child gets upset at first. Tummy time can be frightening for a child with a visual impairment but by carrying it out little and often as part of your baby's play time and routine he/she should quickly start to enjoy it.

**Please Note:** These are general guidelines only. Please link with your physiotherapist for specific guidelines for your child especially if your child has other needs in addition to his/her visual impairment.



### For further information please contact:

The Physiotherapy Department

ChildVision,  
National Education Centre  
for Blind Children,  
Gracepark Road,  
Drumcondra,  
Dublin 9,  
Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0)1 8373635  
Fax: +353 (0)1 8373884  
Email: [info@childvision.ie](mailto:info@childvision.ie)  
Website: [www.childvision.ie](http://www.childvision.ie)



Grace Park Road  
Drumcondra  
Dublin 9, D09 WK0H

T 01 837 3635  
E [info@ChildVision.ie](mailto:info@ChildVision.ie)  
[www.ChildVision.ie](http://www.ChildVision.ie)

## 'Tummy Time'

Why it's important  
for your baby



**ChildVision**  
National Education Centre for Blind Children

**Why is tummy time important?**  
Tummy time (also known as prone lying) is important for all babies. Babies can often spend a long time on their backs in buggies, car seats and bouncer chairs. Tummy time helps to develop head control and it takes pressure off a baby's head to help prevent flattening of the skull.

Tummy time helps a baby to strengthen his/her neck, shoulder and back muscles and is an important precursor to sitting and crawling.



Weight bearing through the hands also develops the strength in the wrist and arches in the hands. This is for fine motor development and skills such as using a spoon. Tummy time also stretches the muscles at the front of the hip joint which can become tight with prolonged sitting.



### How may my child's visual impairment impact on tummy time?

Tummy time can be a frightening experience for a baby with a visual impairment. Understandably, as parents don't want to frighten or upset their child, this may result in the baby spending very little time on his/her tummy, meaning that it may take longer to develop head control. Head control can also be delayed in babies with a visual impairment as they may not be turning their head from side



to side to look around their environment and fixing on and following people/objects, all of which helps to improve head control and stability.

Babies with a visual impairment may understandably be more protected by their parents and it can be hard to challenge your baby with activities like tummy time but hopefully the tips on this leaflet will help make tummy time a regular and fun part of your baby's day.

### Tummy time - when?

Carrying out tummy time little and often is the key to giving your baby the opportunity to get stronger so he/she doesn't become exhausted!



Tummy time can be carried out from birth. Picking the right time of day is important.

Just before a feed when your baby is hungry, or just after a feed, when pressure on his/her tummy might make your baby uncomfortable, are not good times of the day.

Your baby shouldn't be too tired either but choosing a time after a sleep or after a nappy change may work well for you and your baby



### Tummy time - how and where?

Make sure the surface is not too soft as this makes tummy time difficult for your baby and it may put them at risk of suffocation.

Use a firm surface instead. There are "tummy time rolls" available to buy that you position under your baby's chest but a rolled up towel works well too.

Tummy time doesn't just have to be on the floor though. Other ways to do tummy time include:

- Lying over a parent's chest (this can be a great position for a newborn baby)
- Lying over a parent's knees



Laying the baby over your arm as you carry him/her.

Babies with a visual impairment need cues to encourage them to lift and turn their head.

Make tummy time fun with some of the following ideas:

- Getting down close to your baby and talking/singing to him/her
- Play music/nursery rhymes during tummy time
- Use textured mats and toys that interest your baby
- Gently massage your baby's back and arms

