Tummy Time

It is important for babies to have time on their tummies every day. Babies can be placed on their tummies as newborns, during supervised, wakeful time. If your baby was born prematurely, you may need to wait for tummy time until he is stronger and approaches term age.

Tummy time allows your baby to learn to:

- **Push up** on her arms and support her upper body. This helps with fine motor skills such as cutting and writing because they require good shoulder strength and stability.
- **Lift and turn his head.** This helps to build head control.
- **Crawl.** A baby can learn to walk without crawling, but crawling is important because it allows a baby to develop the pelvic and leg strength necessary to stand up from the floor, and eventually, to run, jump, and hop.
- **Explore** her environment by rolling, pivoting, and seeing things from a new perspective.

Most babies quickly learn to like tummy time, once they have become accustomed to the position and especially when they are able to lift their heads. Soon, your baby will learn to love tummy time, and you can place him on his tummy for longer periods, several times a day.

If your baby does not seem to like spending time on her tummy, try the following suggestions:

- Place a **rolled towel or receiving blanket** under his chest and shoulders. This makes it easier for a young infant to lift his head.
- **Just a few minutes**, several times each day, is enough for a young baby to learn to lift and turn her head.
- Place a **plastic mirror or interesting toy** in front of your baby to encourage him to lift his head.
- **Lie on your tummy** in front of your baby; she will love to see your face up close!
- **Lie on your back** with your baby on his tummy on your chest. Once he likes this position, try moving him onto a blanket on the floor.
- **Try shorter periods of time** if your baby is still not tolerating tummy time. Just a few seconds on her tummy followed by a short period on her back, and then return to tummy again. This can be repeated a few times per session.
- **Once your baby is tolerating tummy time,** increase the amount of time he spends in this position each session and each day.

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**Providence Neurodevelopmental Center for Children**

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310 Villa Road, Suite 101  
Newberg, Oregon 97132 | 270 NW Burnside  
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Parents call **PNCC** to schedule appointments: **503-215-2278**