

SIDS Awareness Month: Balancing Tummy Time with Back Time

Pathways' Tummy Time Video Shows Parents "The Moves" to help babies get more time on their tummies and prevent early motor delays

Chicago, IL ([PRWEB](#)) October 10, 2009 -- This October for SIDS Awareness Month, Pathways Awareness is focusing on helping parents learn to balance back sleeping with tummy time when babies are awake. Back sleeping is critical for preventing SIDS, and "tummy time" - safely positioning babies on their stomachs when awake - helps prevent early motor delays. To help parents learn to safely integrate tummy time into their baby's day, the Medical Round Table at Pathways Awareness developed a free, online video and guidelines for parents on the Pathways "Tummy Time Central" Web page (<http://www.pathwaysawareness.org/?q=tummytimecentral>).

"Back sleeping prevents SIDS - that is the safest way for a baby to sleep," says Gay Girolami, physical therapist and member of the Pathways Awareness Medical Round Table. "However, because babies spend so much time on their backs during sleep, awake-time positioning is even more critical because it can help prevent early motor delays."

Pediatric therapists have noticed a dramatic increase in early motor delays in the past six years. Back sleeping, coupled with more awake time babies spend on their backs in car seats and bouncers, has contributed to the trend: babies are spending so much time on their backs that they aren't able to develop their neck and back muscles, leading to conditions such as a flat head (plagiocephaly), tilted neck (torticollis) and other speech and fine motor delays as well as the inability to meet critical physical milestones in the first months and years of life. Children's Health magazine recently named torticollis as the number-one commonly missed medical problem in babies.

Parents have enough to worry about with a new baby, but the Pathways Awareness materials show parents how "tummy time" doesn't have to be difficult and can be easily and safely integrated into a baby's day.

"Essential Tummy Time Moves" (www.pathwaysawareness.org/?q=tummytimecentral/video) is a free, online video that shows parents tummy time positions they can begin with a newborn. The video was developed by top medical professionals specializing in early motor development, and has been included as an online resource by several national SIDS organizations, including the National SIDS Resource Center (www.sidscenter.org).

Tummy time: more important than ever

A recent survey of pediatric, physical, occupational and speech therapists showed that in the last six years, therapists have seen a dramatic increase in early motor delays in babies under six months old. Of therapists noting an increase in early motor delays, the vast majority named lack of tummy time while awake as the top reason for the increase, an observation that is supported by several medical studies.

Parents may avoid tummy time because babies often protest and cry when they are placed on their stomachs. The good news is that tummy time can be introduced from birth, and by easing tummy time into daily routines, parents can even use this time to bond with their babies.

In addition, treatment and prevention of early motor delays can be as simple as more tummy time for babies while they are awake. More involved cases of early motor delays may require therapy or orthotics, but most



therapists agree the earlier a condition or delay is identified, the shorter the duration of therapy will be.

Five easy moves

"Essential Tummy Time Moves" (<http://www.pathwaysawareness.org/?q=tummytimecentral/video>) demonstrates how parents and caregivers can use just few simple positions and such as "tummy to tummy" and "lap soothe" each day to provide the freedom of movement needed for their babies to meet critical milestones in growth.

The video and materials also recommend how to link tummy time to familiar activities, such as diapering, playing or bathing to make it easier for babies to adjust to spending time on their stomachs. Pathways recommends babies start with tummy time for just a few minutes - even just a few seconds - per day. By three months, they can eventually build to an hour spread throughout the day.

Many national SIDS organizations stress the importance of tummy time, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics, which has worked to educate parents about the importance of tummy time in conjunction to back sleeping with its "Back to Sleep and Tummy to Play" initiative.

About Pathways Awareness

Established in 1988, Pathways Awareness is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness about the benefits of detecting early motor delays and encouraging physical therapy in very young children. Pathways' critical infant milestones literature has been recognized and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners as the definitive resource concerning early motor delays. For more information, visit www.pathwaysawareness.org.

About SIDS / SIDS Awareness Month

The national non-profit group First Candle/SIDS Alliance and numerous other SIDS organizations throughout the country recognize October as SIDS Awareness Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, SIDS is defined as the sudden death of an infant less than one year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough investigation is conducted. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is the leading cause of death among infants aged one to 12 months.

Influence of supine sleep positioning on early motor milestone acquisition. Dev Med Child Neurol. 2005; 47(6):370-6; discussion 364 (ISSN: 0012-1622), Association between sleep position and early motor development. J Pediatr 2006 Nov;149(5):623-629. (ISSN: 0022-3476), The effects of prone positioning on the quality and acquisition of developmental milestones in four-month-old infants. Pediatr Phys Ther 2007;19(1):48-55., Impacting infant head shapes. Advances in Neonatal Care, Vol5, No 6 (December), 2005: pp 329-340, Diagnosis and management of positional head deformity. Am Fam Physician 2003;67:1953-6

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Online Web 2.0 Version

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