

# Know & Grow



Supporting new parents at every stage.



# Know and Grow... Together.

We know that as a first-time parent, or a new parent, you are getting lots of information from friends, family and your health care provider. The internet, and specifically social media sites, are also full of advice for new parents.

How do you know what is right for you? And how do you find reliable information from your own community?

Southwestern Public Health's Healthy Growth and Development team has design its website with you in mind. It's easy to scan and links only to credible, reliable information from reliable experts.

Join us online for information about breastfeeding, infant formula, child safety, postpartum mood disorders, and our Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program. [www.swpublichealth.ca/knowandgrow](http://www.swpublichealth.ca/knowandgrow)

Explore the rest of the Southwestern Public Health website for more information on immunization, school health, infectious diseases, food safety and more topics to keep your family healthy and well.

And of course – we're active on social media. Follow us on Instagram or Facebook for family focused content.

# Tummy Time for Baby

Babies should be placed on their backs for sleep. They need tummy time when awake and when someone is watching them.

## Why is tummy time important?

### Tummy time:

- Helps your baby's motor development
- Strengthens their neck, shoulders, and back muscles
- Teaches your baby to lift their head and push up with their arms
- Helps your baby learn how to roll, crawl, and pull to stand
- Gives your baby a chance to explore

### How much tummy time should an infant have?

- Start your newborn baby with a short amount of tummy time 2 to 3 times a day when awake
- Slowly increase the amount of tummy time as your baby grows
- Build tummy time into your daily routine – try after diaper changes and getting dressed
- By 3 months babies should be able to hold their head up well when on their tummy and enjoy an hour of tummy time each day, in a few short sessions



## How can I make tummy time fun?

- Keep tummy time positive by talking, smiling, and singing to your baby
- Place a toy just out of baby's reach - encourage them to reach for the toy
- Try placing toys in a circle around baby and encourage reaching for different toys
- Lie face-to-face with your baby or use a mirror so baby can see their own face



## What if my baby does not like being on their tummy?

- When your baby is on their tummy, they must work against gravity to move
- Be patient – it can take time for babies to learn to like being on their tummy
- Comfort and soothe your baby and keep giving tummy time

## What if my baby gets a flat spot on their head?

Babies have soft flexible skull bones that mold easily – some babies will develop a flat spot. This will usually round out over time. Remember to:

- Change your baby's head position when you lay them on their back to sleep
- Place their head at the foot of the crib one day and at the head of the crib the next
- Limit time in the bouncy chair, car seat, stroller or other devices that restrict movement
- Hold your baby in your arms and have supervised tummy time several times each day
- Talk with a health care provider if you notice your baby has a flat spot or trouble turning or lifting their head

# A Baby's Safe Sleep Environment



1. Always place baby on back for naps and at night.
2. No smoking around baby.
3. Baby sleeps alone in crib.
4. Crib empty of toys and loose bedding.
5. Crib next to adult's bed for first 6 months.
6. Firm crib mattress, tight-fitting sheet.
7. Crib meets Canadian safety regulations.
8. Baby's face uncovered.
9. Baby in light clothing, not too hot.
10. Share this information with anyone who may care for your baby.

# Safe Sleep Time

There are steps that you can take to help create a safe sleep environment for your baby and lower the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).



Provide a smoke-free environment, before and after your baby is born.



Breastfeeding can protect your baby.



Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, at naptime and night time.



Provide your baby with a safe sleep environment that has a firm surface and no pillows, comforters, quilts or bumper pads.



Place your baby to sleep in a crib, cradle or bassinet next to your bed.

## Did you know?

- Newborn babies wake many times at night to feed. Waking through the night is normal!
- Newborns need an average of 14-18 hours of sleep in 24 hours.
- Be flexible! Aim to develop a sleep routine based on the needs of your baby.
- Your baby needs your loving care to better develop healthy sleep habits.
- Routines are important to help infants sleep well.

# Adjusting to parenthood

Many women feel sad or anxious during the first few weeks after childbirth. If these feelings continue or get worse, you may have a postpartum mood disorder (PPMD).

## Risk factors

- Depression and/or anxiety during pregnancy
- Family history of depression
- Stressful life events
- Lack of support in time of need
- Low self-esteem
- Relationship difficulties
- Pregnancy complications
- Traumatic birth or premature/sick baby
- Infertility

## Ways to help yourself and your partner

- Learn about postpartum mood disorders
- Talk to someone you trust
- Share parenting and household tasks
- Accept offers of help
- Plan for rest and sleep
- Be loving and supportive
- Seek professional help

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a grey t-shirt, holding a newborn baby wrapped in a white blanket. She is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

Up to **80%** of women  
feel sad after childbirth

About 1 in 5 women and 1 in 10 men experience a postpartum mood disorder.

It can happen to anyone. We can help.

Go to the last page of this booklet for more information about resources and support.



## How are you feeling?

Name	Facts	Symptoms
Baby Blues	Within the first three to five days after birth, you can experience temporary emotional distress called the baby blues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crying spells</li><li>• Feeling sad</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Feeling frustrated</li><li>• Feeling tired</li></ul>
Postpartum Depression	If the blues last for more than two weeks and are not helped by rest, you may be experiencing postpartum depression. This can occur up to a year after baby arrives. Any parent can develop it. You need professional support to help you and your family through this difficult time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeling overwhelmed or anxious</li><li>• Having difficulty sleeping and/or eating</li><li>• Feeling sad or hopeless</li><li>• Having no feelings for your baby</li><li>• Fearing that you may harm yourself or your baby</li><li>• Not wanting to be with friends or family member you previously enjoyed</li></ul>
Postpartum Anxiety	It is very common for women or men experiencing a postpartum mood disorder to show signs of anxiety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fear of being alone with your baby</li><li>• Panic attacks, extremely anxious</li><li>• Feeling that something bad is about to happen</li><li>• Inability to sleep due to racing thoughts</li><li>• Fearing that you may harm yourself or your baby</li></ul>
Postpartum Psychosis	This is a severe and less common mood disorder that can develop suddenly in the first few weeks after birth. Immediate medical help is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A loss of contact with reality</li><li>• Hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that are not real)</li><li>• Thoughts or actions related to suicide and/or the death of your baby</li></ul>

# Infant car seat safety

A rear-facing seat gives the best protection for your baby's head, neck and spine in a sudden stop or crash. You can use either a rear-facing only seat or a larger, rear-facing convertible seat if your baby fits correctly.

## Helpful tips for using your infant seat

- Install the seat at the most reclined angle allowed for your newborn. Check the instructions.
- Do not use items that did not come with your seat.
- Dress your baby in light layers and add blankets over top once they are safely buckled. Bulky coats and bunting bags are not safe for the car seat.
- Take your baby out of the car seat when you arrive. A car seat is not a safe place for your baby to sleep.
- Make sure your seat is safe to use. You can find a checklist, videos, and other resources on our website.

## When is your baby ready for the next seat?

Check the labels on your seat to find out when your baby will reach the seat's height or weight limits. Once your child has outgrown the infant seat, use a larger, rear-facing seat. Keep your child rear facing for as long as they still fit the larger, rear-facing seat.

For more information visit [parachute.ca](http://parachute.ca) or [childsafetylink.ca](http://childsafetylink.ca)

## How to Install your child's car seat

Make sure the harness straps are in the slot level with or below your child's shoulders.

Tighten the harness straps. You should not be able to pinch the harness at the shoulder.

The harness should be flat with no twists.

Place the chest clip at your baby's armpit level.

Attach the seat using the lower anchors (UAS) or seat belt and tighten. If you use the seat belt, it must be locked. The seat should move less than one inch (2.5 cm) where it is attached to the car.



- Place the car seat in the back seat, facing the back of the vehicle.
- Place the handle where the instructions tell you. All seats are different.
- Read your vehicle manual and follow the instructions for your seat.
- Adjust the seat to recline at the correct angle. Check your instructions.

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# Know and Grow with Southwestern Public Health

Pregnancy, breastfeeding and parenting can be tough. Unsure of birthing options? Having trouble with feedings? Worried about your child's diet, growth, or development? Eliminate those pre-baby or parenting jitters with our many resources available, including prenatal classes, pregnancy information, breastfeeding support, and at-home visits with a Public Health Nurse.

Connect with us for support with:

- Breastfeeding
- Child safety
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Parenting
- Postpartum mood disorders
- Preconception and pregnancy
- Pregnancy and baby supports including nurse-led clinics, breastfeeding classes, and online prenatal classes

To connect with us find us online or call us at:

**Oxford County Know & Grow Line**

519-421-9901 x 3473

**Elgin County Know & Grow Line**

519-631-9900 x 1400



## EarlyON Centres

EarlyON Child and Family Centres offer free, high-quality programs for families and children from birth to 6 years of age where you can:

- Join fun activities such as reading, storytelling, sing-alongs, and games.
- Get advice from professionals trained in early childhood development.
- Find out about other family services in your community.
- Connect with other families with young children.



### EarlyON Oxford

[www.oxfordearlyon.ca](http://www.oxfordearlyon.ca)

519-539-9800 ext. 3317

Toll Free: 1-800-755-0394

Email: [earlyon@oxfordcounty.ca](mailto:earlyon@oxfordcounty.ca)

### EarlyON St. Thomas-Elgin

[www.stthomaselginearlyon.ca](http://www.stthomaselginearlyon.ca)

West: 519.785.2164 Email: [earlyonwest@gmail.com](mailto:earlyonwest@gmail.com)

Central: 226.927.1997 Email: [earlyonelgin@swo.ymca.ca](mailto:earlyonelgin@swo.ymca.ca)

East: 519.631.9496 Email: [eastelginearlyon@gmail.com](mailto:eastelginearlyon@gmail.com)

# EarlyON

Child and Family Centre



# Community Resources

## REACH OUT

Reach Out is a free, 24/7, confidential mental health and addictions support and services line for people living in Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford and London. If you need mental health and addictions help, Reach Out is the one service you should connect with.

Phone: 519-433-2023, Toll free: 1-866-933-2023, Text: 519-433-2023, Web Chat: [www.reachout247.ca](http://www.reachout247.ca)



CMHA Thames Valley – Mental Health and Addiction Services

Elgin County Office: 519-633-1781 or 1-855-633-1781

Oxford County Office: Phone: 519-539-8055 or 1-800-859-7248

[www.cmhatv.ca](http://www.cmhatv.ca)



Information for parents from Canada's paediatricians on infant, child, and teen health and well-being. [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)



Dial 811

[www.health811.ontario.ca](http://www.health811.ontario.ca)

Connect with a registered nurse day or night for free, secure and confidential health advice.



Postpartum Support International. Online and phone support for prenatal and postnatal mood disorders. [www.postpartum.net](http://www.postpartum.net), PSI helpline (non-crisis): 1-800-944-4773

**Supporting new parents at every stage.**



**St. Thomas Site**  
1230 Talbot St.  
St. Thomas, ON  
N5P 1G9  
519-631-9900  
1-800-922-0096

**Woodstock Site**  
410 Buller St.  
Woodstock, ON  
N4S 4N2  
519-421-9901  
1-800-922-0096

[www.swpublichealth.ca](http://www.swpublichealth.ca)