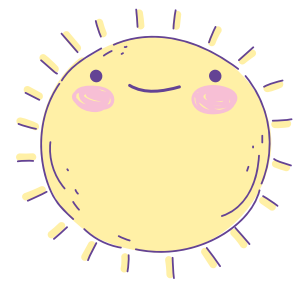


Down Syndrome Developmental Home Program

Down Syndrome (also called Trisomy 21) is a chromosomal condition that happens when a child is born with an extra copy of chromosome 21. The extra chromosome changes the way the brain and body develop. While every child is unique, certain characteristics are common of children with Down Syndrome. This fact sheet includes information on how to best support your baby over the next few months.



Muscle Tone

Muscle tone is a measurement of the stiffness of resting muscles. Babies with Down Syndrome often have hypotonia or decreased muscle tone. Hypotonia can impact an infant's motor skill abilities such as reaching of the hands to the mouth, the ability to suck well while taking a bottle or breastfeeding, lifting the head and pushing up when lying prone or protecting the soft tissues around joints.

Diaper Change

Babies with Down syndrome may be at higher risk for hip dislocation. Keep your baby's legs bent and roll the hips side to side during diaper changes. It is important to avoid pulling one or both legs as it puts strain around the joints.

Picking up your Baby

Roll your baby to the side before lifting. Keep your baby tucked and pick him up by the hips and shoulder. Support the head. The side-lying position minimizes the startle reflex and encourages your baby to use neck muscles and side muscles.

Feeding

A baby eats better when their body is aligned. Take time to ensure your baby's head and body are aligned and slightly tucked. Swaddle your baby to give extra stability and place on the side for feeding. Side-lying prevents your baby from working against gravity during feeding. The football hold is the most supportive position for breastfeeding babies with Down syndrome.

Holding/Swaddling

Support muscle development and protect joints by keeping your baby's arms and legs tucked close to the body. Do not let arms and legs dangle.

Tummy Time

Work on shoulder strength, back strength and hip strength by allowing your baby playtime on tummy while supervised. Try putting baby on tummy for a short time at each diaper change to get used to this position.

Resources:

Baby Watch Early Intervention
<https://health.utah.gov/cshcn/programs/babywatch.html>

Utah Down Syndrome Foundation
<https://www.udsf.org/>

March of Dimes
<https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/down-syndrome.aspx>

National Down Syndrome Society
https://www.ndscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/CDSS_breastfeeding_brochure.pdf

