

BABY MASSAGE HANDOUT

Nurturing touch is a naturally rewarding way for both you and your baby to relieve stress. Massage is an effective treatment to offer infants relief of discomfort from constipation, colic, and gas by helping aid digestion. Pediatric massage improves the infant's delicate immune system by decreasing the body's levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that takes a toll on immune functioning. As well, massage causes the release of oxytocin, which is a nurturing hormone to reduce infant anxiety and helps baby to relax. By relieving stress and reducing discomfort infants sleep better and are better able to cope with the busy world around them.

Infant massage also helps to increase circulation, increase alertness and enhance nervous system, neurological and intellectual development. Massage improves communication, by increasing confidence and sensitivity to your baby's cues. Parents who massage their infant are able to build a greater bond, as it gives them time to interact and connect on a deeper level than regular day-to-day contact provides.

Do not massage infants or children if they ...

- **Have acute infections, fever, or are sick**
- **Have diarrhea**
- **Have any undiagnosed lumps or bumps**
- **Have a contagious disease**
- **Have any open sores or inflammation**
- **Have any fractures or recent surgery (within 8 weeks)**
- **Have serious skin conditions**
- **Were immunized within 24 hours**

Baby massage is a wonderful way to help baby build a structured routine. Find a time that works for you, whether it's first thing in the morning, after nap, after bath, or before bed. You can give a massage at anytime of the day. Sometimes it may only last seconds or sometimes you may be able to get through the whole routine. Judge by baby's signals. (Unfortunately, they are not always predictable). Just remember that it's always important for BOTH you and baby to be in a stress free mood, so that massage and touch is always a positive experience.

Good Luck and have fun!

ROUTINE:

#1) Relax and breath deeply through your nose to help ease any stresses that you may have before giving your infant the massage. Remove your baby's clothes and lay him/her somewhere safe, warm, and comfortable.

#2) Oil your palms and rub them together to warm them up. (organic olive oil or grape seed oil are great natural options).

#3) Show your palms to baby and request permission to massage him/her. This will allow babies to learn that he/she is in control of their own body. Smile, and begin.

Legs and Feet

- **Long strokes up the legs (always distal to proximal (towards the heart))**
- **Wringing and rolling**
- **Thumbing the feet**
- **Toe squeeze and pulls**

Stomach

- **Thumb spread**
- **Waterfalls**
- **Belly circles**
- **I LOVE YOU move (Remember ALWAYS clockwise)**

Chest

- **Palm tree**

Arms and Hands

- **Longs stokes**
- **Wringing and rolling**
- **Finger pull**

Face

- **Smile**
- **Relax the jaw**
- **Figure 8's or circular motions lightly on temples**
- **Ears, neck, and all those chins**

Back

- **Long strokes**
- **Hips circle/figure 8's on glutes with palms**
- **Thumbing along both sides of the spine**

- **Rain drops from shoulders to feet**
Turn baby onto back again and give a big kiss to grow on!

STRETCHES

- **Arms and leg cross**
- **Arm crosses**
- **Leg digestive circles**
- **Leg bicycle**