

## What is infant massage?

Infant massage is a way for you to comfort and interact with your baby through touch. It also helps you and your baby bond.

## How does infant massage help?

You and your baby benefit from any positive, loving touch. It can help to improve your baby's:

- Growth and development
- Weight gain
- Muscle tone and blood circulation
- Relaxation and sleep patterns
- Brain development
- Awareness of the world around them

It helps lower your baby's:

- Stress
- Pain from constipation, gas or colic
- Crying

It helps you:

- Bond with your baby.
- Learn about your baby's needs.
- Improve communication with your baby.

## How do I prepare?

Get ready for your baby's massage:

- Make sure the room temperature is warm.
- Place your baby on a soft surface.
- Warm your hands.
- Talk with your doctor about which lotion, oil or cream is safe to use on your baby's skin.

## What are the steps?

A child life specialist (CLS), occupational therapist (OT) or physical therapist (PT) may help teach you the steps to infant massage. Some guidelines include:

- Make sure your baby is ready. They should be alert and not fussy.
- Start by massaging your baby's feet and hands.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Infant massage, continued

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- Move on to massage their arms, legs and head if your baby shows you that they like it. Then, massage their back and stomach.
- Massage your baby's entire body from their toes to head. Use a slow and gentle, but firm touch. Try not to tickle your baby.
- Make eye contact with your baby.
- Watch your baby. They will show you what they like.
- Give your baby a break and comfort them if they shows signs that they do not like massage.

Please let your baby's therapist know if you have any questions or concerns about infant massage.

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Therapist

Date

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Phone number

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

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