

Postpartum



NUTRITION PROGRAM

7 playtime dos and don'ts

You're never too young (or old!) for playing. Here are some ways you can both enjoy fun-filled, safe, and stimulating daily activities that set your little one up for an active, healthy life.

**4 mins
to read**

? Do... give her lots of stimulation and activity during the day

Whether she's reaching out for your face, wriggling while you sing a song, or smiling at a noisy toy, stimulation and movement are important. And remember that the more activity and stimulation she gets during the day, the more she may sleep at night.

? Don't... ever leave your child unsupervised

Never leave your child alone while she's playing, even for a moment. Always keep her in your sight to make sure she's safe.

? Do... give her plenty of space

You don't need to send your child to an exercise class or other outside program to be sure she gets the daily activity she needs. All she needs is a bit of space to freely move her arms and legs while she's on her back. This (along with tummy time) will help build the muscles and motor skills she needs for future sitting and crawling.

? Don't... use child seats or bouncers for long periods of time

If you do use child swing seats or bouncers, limit the amount of time your child spends in them. She needs space to wriggle, kick, and move around for healthy development.

? Do... provide daily tummy time for play

Spending time on her tummy can help your little one build strong muscles and develop the motor skills she'll need to eventually sit up, eat solid food, and crawl. Daily tummy time can also help prevent a flattening of the back her head – a condition related to a child being on her back for extended periods of time during the first few months.

? Don't... put your child to sleep on her tummy

For safety reasons, little children should always sleep on their backs. This will reduce your child's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

? Do.... keep your child within arm's reach

As well as constantly watching your child, make sure she's not able to slip or fall off high surfaces such as her changing table. If she's on a high surface and you need to fetch something, such as a diaper, carry her with you or place her on the floor (still in sight).

? Don't.... let her play near dangerous objects

She may not be able to crawl yet, but babies have an uncanny ability to seek out danger in a room. Check carefully that there is nothing within her reach that could be hazardous.

? Do.... play several times a day, every day

Brief and often is the key to happy playtimes. You may find she's only engaged in playing for a short while, but don't give up and think it's over for today. She might be in the mood for another brief playtime after a feeding, nap, rest, or diaper change.

? Don't... continue playtime when she's tired or hungry

Playtime can happen at any time of the day and last as long as she's interested. Don't set aside a block of

time for 'play' and expect her to always engage and stay interested. If she's getting fussy, she might be tired or hungry so let her set the pace.

? Do... interact to get your child moving

What makes your precious one giggle, squeal, and wave her arms and legs in delight? Whether it's peekaboo or gentle tickling, do something that makes your child move.

? Don't... worry about looking silly (it's all part of the fun)

It might not come naturally at first, but making funny faces or singing silly songs is all part of the joy of being a parent. You're enjoying precious playtime and helping your child's healthy development too.

? Do... go outside

When the weather is nice, find a shady spot to lay your little one down on a blanket so she can feel the wind and hear outdoor sounds. She may enjoy looking around at all the new things in this different environment.

? Don't... stay in the sun

If you do go outside on a sunny day, keep your child in the shade. Children's skin is more sensitive than ours. A hat will help protect her face but remember that the sun's rays can reach your child even on a cloudy day. If you're unsure, ask your healthcare provider for advice on staying safe in the sun.

Sources

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1081-tips-on-playing-with-babies-and-toddlers> (Accessed December 29 2016)

<http://journal.naeyc.org/btj/200605/NASPEGuidelinesBTJ.pdf> (Accessed December 29 2016)

Last revised: November, 2016