

Infant massage is a caring and soothing touch done for infants. It can be taught to parents by a certified infant massage instructor (CIMI). Massage is a way for parents to connect with their new babies who need to feel safe and secure.

## What are the benefits of infant massage?

- Babies may fall asleep faster and sleep longer.
- Babies may gain weight faster.
- Colic and digestive problems may improve.
- It helps with blood circulation.
- It helps development of the nervous system.
- It may make your baby more alert and aware.
- It limits the release of stress hormones. This often helps babies feel more relaxed.
- The immune system may work better to fight infections.



## When should I massage my baby?

Massage should be done while your baby is awake, rested, smiling, and playful. This is called the quiet alert stage. You may find that massage works best after a bath, before eating, or before putting your baby down to sleep. Wait for 30 minutes after a feeding to massage your baby. This gives your baby time to digest their food. Start out with 3 to 5 minutes two times a day. Work up to about 20 to 30 minutes a day.

## How do I do infant massage?

- Choose a comfortable room that is warm. Undress and put your baby on a blanket or towel on the floor. Dim the lights or play soft music to help calm your baby.
- Softly tell your baby you are going to start the massage.
- Rub a small amount of olive oil or grape seed oil into your hands. This helps them glide over your baby's skin. Keep the oil away from your baby's eyes and mouth.
- Start the massage with your baby's feet and toes. Move up to the calves, thighs, tummy, chest, shoulders, arms/fingers, hands, face, neck, stomach, and back.
- Watch how your baby responds. You may notice that your baby likes some areas massaged more than others. If your baby gets upset, stop and try again later.
- End with resting your hands on your baby's chest. Think about how nice it is to have the time to relax and enjoy each other.



More information on Infant Massage can be found on the International Association for Infant Massage (IAIM) website at <http://www.iaim.ws>.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has:

- Epilepsy or a seizure disorder.
- Had recent surgery.
- Special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**