

Baby massage – in pictures

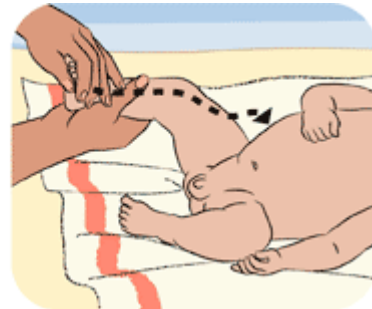
Getting started with baby massage



Baby massage is soothing and can comfortably last 10-30 minutes. Before starting, make sure the room is warm and your baby is quiet, well-rested and alert. Good times to perform massage include after a nap, when your baby is clothed or in the cot, and after a bath.



To get started, smooth a few drops of a suitable baby massage oil or moisturiser into your warm hands and begin massaging the soles of your baby's feet. Use firm, gentle, slow strokes from the heel towards the toes. Always keep one hand on your baby while massaging. Some babies might be sensitive to some oils. Look for any sign of an allergic reaction, and see your GP immediately if you're worried.

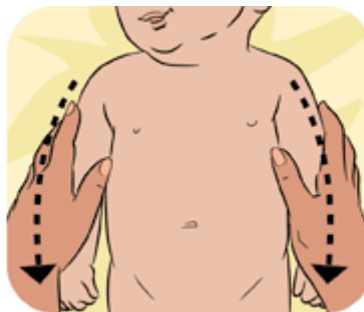


Continue with long smooth strokes up your baby's legs. Massage from the ankle up to the thigh and over the hip. You can try massaging both legs at once or one at a time. Avoid massaging the genital area. Hold your baby's leg under the knee and gently press it towards the tummy to help baby expel gas.

Massaging baby's upper body



Start the upper body massage with your hands on your baby's shoulders. Make gentle strokes in towards the chest.



Massage baby's arms by stroking from the shoulders down towards the wrists. Try not to get oil on your baby's hands. If this happens, wipe his fingers clean before he sucks them.

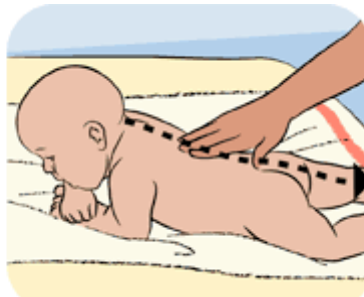


If your baby's tummy feels soft (not hard or full), massage his belly using circular, clockwise strokes. Babies' tummies are sensitive, so if he gets unsettled, move on to the next step. Avoid massaging the belly button area if the cord hasn't completely healed.

Massaging baby's face and back



Use your fingertips to massage your baby's face. Stroke from the middle of her forehead, down the outside of her face and in towards her cheeks. With your fingertips, massage the scalp in small circles as if you're shampooing her hair.



If your baby is still relaxed once you've finished massaging the front of her body, you can turn her onto her tummy and use long, smooth strokes from head to toe.



Use respectful touch and stop the massage if your baby isn't enjoying herself or seems uncomfortable. It's also best to avoid a massage if you're very tense, or if your baby is upset.