Guidelines For Infant Massage

Benefits of massage:
By directly stimulating the sense of touch, infant massage has many effects in stimulating infant development.

- The friction of massage warms the baby’s skin.
- Continuous stroking can calm a fussy infant.
- Massage of the tummy can relieve colic symptoms.
- It helps you to know your infant’s body and skin in order to detect any abnormalities, including new lumps and bumps.
- Massaging your infant provides close contact for all of you. Have fun!

How to do infant massage:

- Make sure the room is warm and not drafty.
- Use any oil or lotion you like, but make sure it is safe and non-irritating to a newborn’s tender skin. A nice product to use is a baby oil that comes in the form of a lotion.
- Place your baby on a safe, comfortable surface. Warm the lotion oil in your hands by rubbing them together before applying.
- Massage can be done right after bath time to calm and warm the infant and is a great bonding time for Dads (and rest time for Moms!).
- There are several different ways to massage an infant, and whatever feels comfortable is fine. You can start by gently massaging the scalp and face (without using oil or lotion) using small circular motions. As you move down to the torso, use larger circular motions. To massage the arms and legs, use a twisting outward motion, paying particular attention to the hands, fingers, feet and toes.
- As you massage, do not forget to talk or sing because babies love to hear voices.
- Not all infants like massage, so if it makes them irritable it may not be worth the effort.
- Some parents feel uncomfortable with the techniques at first. If your baby seems to be responding well to massage, practice will result in many benefits to both of you.
Step 13

Step 14

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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