

Infant Massage

Both research and anecdotal evidence from families have shown that there are many ways that babies and families may benefit from infant massage.

They can be grouped into four categories: Interaction, Stimulation, Relief and Relaxation.

Interaction in Infant Massage May Include:

- Promotion of bonding and secure attachment
- Verbal/non-verbal communication
- Development of trust and confidence
- Using all the senses
- Feelings of love, respect, and being valued

Each Massage May Stimulate:

- Circulatory and digestive systems
- Hormonal and immune systems
- Coordination and balance
- Learning and concentration
- Muscular development and growth
- Mind and body awareness

Parents May Find that Infant Massage Helps Relieve:

- Gas and colic
- Constipation and elimination
- Growing pains and muscular tension
- Teething discomfort
- Cramps

The Massage Promotes Relaxation which May be Shown Through:

- Improved sleep patterns
- Increased flexibility and muscle tone
- Regulation of behavioral states
- Being calm and being able to calm themselves
- Reduction in stress hormones

“ I am familiar with the advantages of infant massage and skin to skin contact for both the growing premature infant and the full term infant. These techniques help the parents build a bond with their premature and full term baby. The International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) is especially skilled in teaching this technique to parents. Infant massage is very useful in calming infants and enhancing growth. ”

– *Dr. Marshall Klaus MD is a Pediatrician and Neonatologist whose research and work have focused on the humanizing of care given to the family in the perinatal period. Dr. Klaus is the co-editor of Care of the High-Risk Infants, a mainstay in the intensive care nursery. He is also co-author of several books including Your Amazing Newborn, and is currently working on a book about parent-infant bonding called Bonding: Building a Secure Attachment and Independence. Dr. Klaus also serves as Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California in San Francisco.*

“ When I became a mother, my son was incredibly fussy and watching him go through those moments was heart-breaking. I took what the infant massage educator taught me and used it with my son every day, sometimes more than once. It became more than just a calming tool for those fussy moments. The massage [times we shared] became bonding times of unspeakable communication. I instantly felt connected to him. His fussy moments were driven from pain and discomfort and the fact that my touch was able to calm him gave me a feeling no words can explain. ” - a mother

More about Bonding

Bonding has been defined as a “unique relationship between two people that is specific and endures through time.”

Touch is a very powerful element in human bonding. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, and prolonged eye contact are also important elements of bonding. Infant massage encompasses and supports all these vital aspects of bonding.

Delayed bonding may occur due to situations such as premature birth, recovery from caesarean, medical complications, adoption, lack of physical and emotional support and postnatal depression. In these cases, infant massage can help families recreate the elements of bonding, which may help a parent and baby fall in love with each other.

Massage may be helpful in encouraging the connection between parent and child as children grow. It may facilitate deeper understanding, integration and the connection with parents or caregivers. Some families have found that massaging their baby is particularly helpful in enhancing the bond with children with special needs.

Massage gives fathers a chance to connect and interact with their child on a deeper level than the usual day-to-day contact might provide.