

Baby Massage for Babies with Special Health Needs

Massage is a wonderful skill for parents to learn so that they can introduce positive touch to their baby. It gives the opportunity for special time together; incorporating not only the massage, but also therapeutic hugs and holds, and fun with nursery rhymes and music. Baby massage is also a fantastic way for parents to learn how their baby communicates with them, enabling parents to understand what their baby wants and comfort them with loving touch. This can be said for a baby that has been born prematurely or has special health needs, as it can for a full-term, healthy baby.

If your baby has spent time on a neonatal unit, this may have left you feeling nervous and lacking confidence to touch and hold your baby. The good news is that research shows that parents who regularly massage their baby, will be helping their baby to understand what loving touch is, whilst improving their own general mood and increase positive interaction, that is vital for building a good relationship with their baby.

Finding the right baby massage teacher

Many baby massage teachers are able to offer one-to-one sessions in the home, or group sessions with other parents. It is so important to find a baby massage teacher who has the Touch-Learn Massage for Babies with Special Health Needs qualification who:

- Understands the needs of premature babies, babies with special needs and their parents
- Is able to offer a service that is tailored specifically for both you and your baby, always working at the right pace for you both
- Offers a sensitive, empowering and inclusive environment so that learning the art of baby massage is pleasurable for both you and your baby
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As time goes by you will start to really understand and get to know what your baby likes and feel confident that what you are doing is not only safe, but will help your baby.

Before massage: starting with positive touch

In the early days massage may have to be introduced gradually starting with special containment holds and gentle stroking to prepare your baby for massage, then progressing to a few strokes each session to build your baby's tolerance, until the point when they are happy to receive a full massage.

Just before starting massage...

Baby massage can be used with infants with many disabilities; however you are always advised to check with your baby's specialist or physicians first to ensure that there are no medical reasons why your baby cannot attend and enjoy baby massage.