

Documented Benefits of Infant Massage

Improved Sleep Patterns

Infants experienced improved sleep immediately after being massaged (Argarwal et al., 2000).

Low birth weight infants receiving massage exhibited better sleep patterns and greater alertness when awake (Kelmanson & Asulas, 2006).

Infants who were massaged before bedtime adjusted to a more favorable rest-activity cycle by the age of 8 weeks and by 12 weeks produced more melatonin during the night (Goldstein Ferber, Laudon, Kuint, Weller, & Zisapel, 2002a).

Infant massage by mothers has resulted in less irritability and fewer sleep problems in babies (Field, 2010).

Enhanced Development

Massage on healthy, preterm infants showed a positive influence on brain and visual development (Guzzetta et al., 2009).

Preterm infants receiving massage therapy gained more weight and slept less (Dieter, Field, Hernandez-Reif, Emory & Redzepi, 2003; Gonzalez et al., 2009).

Massage therapy led to weight gain and increased bone density in preterm infants (Field, Diego & Hernandez-Reif, 2010).

Massage combined with physical activity improved bone mineralization in premature infants (Aly et al., 2004).

Low birth weight infants receiving parent administered massage had greater weight gain (Kelmanson & Adulas, 2006).

Preterm infants who received massage therapy from mothers or trained professionals exhibited enhanced weight gain (Goldstein Ferber, Laudon, Kuint, Weller, & Zisapel 2002b).

Better Cost Effectiveness and Shorter Hospital Stays

Preterm infants receiving parent-administered massage and usual nursery care had shorter hospital stays (Gonzalez et al., 2009).

Very-low-birth-weight infants receiving mother administered massage were discharged from hospital an average of 7 days earlier (Mendes & Procianoy, 2008).

Improved Medical Outcomes for Infants

Massage ameliorated jaundice in full-term newborns (Chen, Sadakata, Sekuzuka & Sayama, 2011).

Increased serum insulin and IGF-1 levels followed massage therapy (Field et al., 2008).

Vagal activity significantly increased during infant massage therapy (Field & Diego, 2008).

Sleep apnea reduced in low birth weight infants receiving parent administered massage (Kelmanson & Adulas, 2006).

Lower incident of late-onset sepsis in preterm neonates receiving mother administered massage (Mendes & Procianoy, 2008).

Safe for Medically Fragile Infants

A parent-trained touch massage protocol for medically fragile infants in a level III neonatal intensive care unit was both feasible and safe. Babies remained physiologically stable and had no change in agitation/pain scores (Livingston et al., 2007).

A greater increase in temperature was noted for pre-term infants receiving massage therapy even though incubator portholes remained open during the massage (Diego, Field & Hernandez-Reif, 2008).

Stress Reduction

Massaged pre-term infants showed fewer stress behaviors and less activity during a five-day study (Hernandez-Reif, Diego & Field, 2007).

Reduction of Depression and Anxiety in Mothers

Mothers of preterm infants had lower levels of depression and anxiety after massaging their infants (Feijo et al., 2006).

Improved Parenting Practices

Interventions to support early relationships: mechanisms identified within infant massage programs (Underdown & Barlow, 2011)

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