

“Loving touch right from the start. . .”

## THE ART OF INFANT MASSAGE

Massaging your baby is a beautiful and loving way to begin a lifelong relationship.

Early psychological and sensory input is essential in facilitating the development of all infants. Infant Massage is a preventative program that provides loving touch right from the start. Understanding and beginning touch early in life can improve the quality of parenting and family life and promote the well-being of the infant.

Infant Massage contains such critical elements of bonding as eye-to-eye contact, smiling, soothing vocal sounds, loving touch, caressing, smell, and mutual interaction. Studies show that bonding increases a parent's feeling of attachment as well as the desire to nurture and care for their infant.

### Benefits for the Baby

- ♥ Emotionally nourishes the baby
- ♥ Begins a loving, intimate communication between a parent and the baby
- ♥ Helps to strengthen and regulate the baby's primary systems (ie: respiratory, circulatory, nervous, musculature and gastrointestinal, enhances immune system)
- ♥ Reduces gas and colic and allows the baby to sleep better
- ♥ Helps the baby relax and release the tensions of daily stimuli

### Benefits for Parents

- ♥ Better understanding about their infant's cues of responsiveness
- ♥ Enhances communication and emotional ties
- ♥ Increases confidence and handling skills
- ♥ Greatly improves the bond of affectional attachment
- ♥ Provides a means to develop quality interaction time
- ♥ Helps the parents relax and listen to their baby
- ♥ Massage becomes a perfect avenue for conversation as the child gets older

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Infant Massage is about love. . .

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It is never too late to begin infant massage. Whether your baby is a newborn or several years old, massage can bring immediate and lasting results. Expectant parents often take infant massage instruction prenatally so they are ready to begin this wonderful loving touch right from the start.

### The Need for Infant Massage

The growth in popularity for infant massage instruction is due to positive research outcomes and to our changing lifestyles and a desire by parents to provide better care for their infants.

In the situation where both parents are working, daily massage helps compensate for the separation by re-establishing the bond and providing quality time for both parents and the baby.

For fathers, creating and maintaining a close physical bond with a baby is particularly important. They often do not get time or have the opportunity for nurturing. However, through the practice of infant massage, a father experiences a nurturing feeling in a way unlike any other. The mutual interaction gives both the child and the father more self-confidence and a special time together.

Massaging babies provides an important source of tactile stimulation. A study conducted at the University of Miami Medical Center showed that “stimulated [pre-term] neonates averaged a 47% greater weight gain per day, were more active and alert during sleep/wake behavior observation, and showed more mature habituation, orientation, motor and range of state behavior on the Brazelton scale than control infants.”<sup>1</sup> study by Dr. Tiffany Field, Touch Research.

Infant Massage is being adopted in many hospitals and clinics across the country as part of their standard community and parenting education programs. In addition, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, massage therapists, childbirth educators and other health care professionals are incorporating infant massage into their practices.

### Loving Touch® Parent-Infant Massage Program

These classes taught by Certified Infant Massage Instructors (CIMI®) are especially designed for parents, grandparents, and primary caregivers, and are usually customized to meet the needs of each family. Typically, the multiple sessions last between 75 to 90 minutes and focus on:

- ♥ The history, theory, and practice of Infant Massage
- ♥ Teaching the baby to relax/responding to cues
- ♥ Bonding and other important parenting issues
- ♥ How to vary massage strokes for the growing toddler/child
- ♥ Dealing with special needs such as colic, prematurity, physical challenges, intestinal difficulties (excessive gas, constipation, etc.)
- ♥ Individualized assistance



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Your Local Instructor