

Measuring Recumbent Length of an Infant

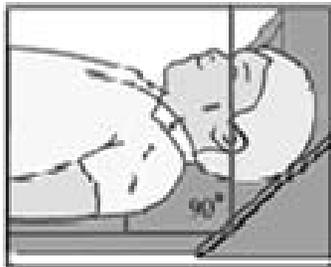
Used for infants up to 24 months. Infants 24 - 36 months and less than 30" while lying down can be measured this way as well, if they have trouble standing.

To measure recumbent length accurately:

1. Two people should help with the measuring.
2. Wash hands (optional) and put a clean paper liner on measuring board.
3. Have the caregiver undress the child, removing outer clothes and shoes. At a minimum, remove outer clothing such as jackets, hats, etc. Have the mother/caregiver make sure the diaper is dry; change it if needed.
4. Have the caregiver lay the child's back flat against the measuring board.
5. Have the caregiver hold the child's head against the headboard. The child's eyes should be looking up at the ceiling. See Diagram below.

Diagram:

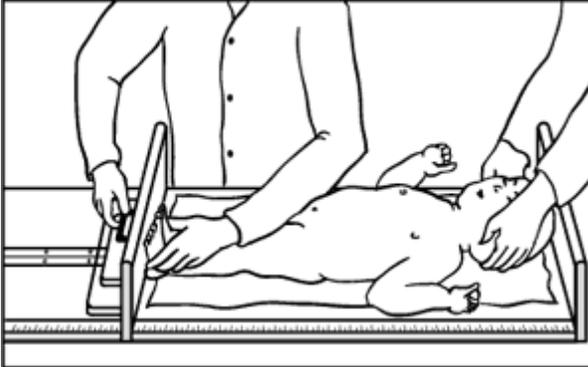
Child's eyes should be looking directly up at the ceiling. The head should be flat up against the headboard. Hairstyles should not prevent a good measurement from being taken. If possible, remove braids or anything that prevents board from resting against the head. If unable to do so, record in your WIC computer system.



6. The WIC staff member can then bring the child's knees together and gently push them down, so that both legs are extended; one of their hands should rest on the child's knees or shins to prevent the child's legs from spreading apart or bending, while the other hand brings the movable footboard to rest firmly against both heels. The toes should point upward and feet need to be flat against the footboard.

(See diagram on next page)

Diagram:



Babies' legs are difficult to straighten – DO NOT FORCE THE LEGS FLAT, AS THE LEGS CAN BE INJURED. You can "pedal" the baby's legs in a circular motion to loosen them up. You can also stroke the bottom of the baby's feet to get the toes to point upward.

7. Read the measurement to the nearest 1/8" of an inch. (Check your state's requirement.)
8. Repeat and take a second measurement.
 - a. If the two measurements are within 1/4", you can enter either of the two measurements into the WIC computer system.
 - b. If the two measurements are not within 1/4" take a third, then take the two closest measurements of the three, and average them. This value can then be entered into the WIC computer system.
 - c. Make sure to check on your state's requirements.
9. Immediately record the measurement in the baby's record. Additionally, record anything that could affect the measuring process, such as a child that won't keep still.

If a child is less than 36 months, and greater than 30 inches, it's best to measure using height, not length. Make sure you make note that you took height, not length, as some computer systems default to length for children under 36 months.

Most Common Errors In Measuring Recumbent Length:

- Incorrect equipment for the age of the child
- Shoes, hats and hair accessories not removed
- Board not firmly against both heels
- Feet not parallel to movable board
- Head not firmly against headboard; remove braids barrettes, ponytails or anything that prevents board from resting against the head. If unable to do so, record in your WIC computer system.
- Body not straight
- Eyes not looking forward
- Body or knees arched or bent
- Only one leg extended
- Board not on flat surface