

Newborns may roll over accidentally because of their rounded backs. The ability to willfully turn from the abdomen to the back occurs around 5 months old, and the ability to turn from the back to the abdomen occurs at approximately 6 months old. Infants put to sleep on their sides may easily roll over to a prone (face-down) position, thus placing them at higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). It is therefore important to place infants in a supine position for sleep. While infants are awake, a prone position (tummy time) is acceptable to enhance achievement of milestones, such as head control, crawling, creeping, and turning over. It is noteworthy that the parachute reflex ([Fig. 9-4](#)), a protective response to falling, appears at approximately 7 months old.

### Nursing Alert

In the first several months, before the infant can roll over, the head should be positioned on alternating sides to prevent positional plagiocephaly (when asleep or awake in the supine position) (see [Chapter 10](#)).



**FIG 9-4** Parachute reflex. (Photo by Paul Vincent Kuntz, Texas Children's Hospital, Houston, TX.)