

Well Care at 4 Months

Feeding

Your baby should still be taking breast milk or infant formula. Most babies now take about 5-6 ounces every 3 to 4 hours during the day.

Some babies are now ready to start cereal. A baby is ready for cereal when he is able to hold his head up enough to eat from a spoon. Cereal should not be given from a bottle or infant feeder. When you start cereal, start with rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula. You may want to start with a thin mix of cereal and then thicken it gradually. Pureed fruits and vegetables can also be started after 5 months. Start a new food no more often than every 2 – 3 days to make sure your baby tolerates the new food.

Never leave the baby in bed with a bottle. This can lead to bad teeth and may cause ear infections.

Development

Babies are starting to roll over from stomach to back. Your baby's voice may become louder; squealing when happy or crying when he wants food or to be held. In both cases, gentle, soothing voices are the best way to calm your baby. Toys that make noise when shaken are enjoyed.

It is normal for babies to cry. At this age you can't spoil a baby. Meeting your baby's needs quickly is still a good idea.

Sleep

Many babies are sleeping through the night by 4 months of age and will also nap 4 to 6 hours during the daytime. A brief period of fussiness prior to going to sleep is normal. If your baby's sleeping patterns are different than this you may want to ask your doctor for ideas about ways to keep your baby alert and awake during the day and sound asleep at night. Remember to place your baby in bed on her back. If your baby has started to roll over, she may sleep in the position of comfort.

Immunizations

At the 4-month visit, your baby should have a:

-) Pentacel (Dtap, Polio, and Hib)
-) Prevnar (pneumococcal) injection
-) Rotateq (rotavirus) oral

Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for about 1-2 days after the shots. Your baby may also have some soreness, redness, and swelling where the shots were given. Acetaminophen drops (we will give you the dose) may help to prevent the fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, cool, washcloth on the are of the shots as often and as long as needed for comfort.

Call us if:

-) Your child has a rash or any other reaction besides fever and mild irritability
-) Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

Safety Tips

Avoid Suffocation and Choking

-) Remove hanging mobiles or toys before the baby can reach them.
-) Keep cords, ropes, or strings away from your baby, especially near the top of the crib. Ropes and strings around the baby's neck can choke him.
-) Keep plastic bags and balloons out of reach.
-) Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.

Avoid Fires and Burns

-) Never eat, drink, or carry anything hot near the baby or while you are holding the baby.
-) Turn down your water heater to 120°F
-) Check smoke detectors to make sure they work.
-) If your child does get burned, rinse the burned area immediately with cold water, for about 10 minutes, then call your doctor.
-) Check formula temperature carefully. Formula should be warm or cool to the touch, and never use the microwave to heat the bottle.
-) Don't smoke and don't expose your baby to smoke.

Car Safety

-) Wear your seat belt
-) Use an approved infant car seat correctly in the back seat.

Avoid Falls

-) Never leave the baby alone on a high place
-) Keep crib and playpen sides up.
-) Do not put your baby in a walker

Next Visit:

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 6 months. At this time your child will get the next set of immunizations. Please bring your immunization book each time your baby is due to get shots.

Normal Development: 4 Months Old

Here's what you might notice your baby doing between the ages of 4 months and 6 months of age.

Daily Activities

-) Is active, playful, and gregarious.
-) Reaches and grasps some objects.
-) Shakes rattle when placed in hand.
-) Carefully studies objects placed in hand.
-) Puts everything into mouth (increased oral behaviors are not necessarily teething).
-) Plays contentedly with fingers and hands.
-) Usually sleeps through the night.

-) Acknowledges bottle gleefully.
-) Laughs and giggles while playing and socializing.
-) Basks in attention
-) Just begins to realize objects exist even when out of sight.

Hearing

-) Turns head purposefully in response to human voice.
-) Smiles and coos when talked to.

Motor Skills

-) Rolls from side to side.
-) Bears weight.
-) Holds up chest when lying on tummy.
-) Supports head when held in sitting position.
-) Sits with support for longer periods.
-) Enjoys using the legs in kicking motions.

Vision

-) Focuses clearly.
-) Fascinated with mirror image.

Each child is unique. It is therefore difficult to describe exactly what should be expected at each stage of a child's development. While certain behaviors and physical milestones tend to occur at certain ages, a wide spectrum of growth and behavior for each age is normal. These guidelines are offered as a way of showing a general progression through the developmental stages rather than as fixed requirements for normal development at specific ages. It is perfectly natural for a child to attain some milestones earlier and other milestones later than the general trend. Keep this in mind as you review these milestones.

If you have any concerns related to your child's own pattern of development, please give us a call.