

## 4 Month Check-up

Normal Development Your baby may...

### *Social:*

- Smile and laugh
- Focus on objects and no longer look cross-eyed

### *Language/Communication:*

- Babble more expressively and spontaneously

### *Cognitive:*

- Respond to affection, changes in environment
- Indicates pleasure and displeasure

### Sleep

- At this age, an established daily routine for feedings, naps, and bedtime is a good idea to help establish eventual longer sleeping stretches at night.
- Babies at this age sleep on average between 12-13 hours per day, and may now begin to give you longer stretches of sleep overnight.
- Place your baby in his crib when he is drowsy, and even patting him to sleep, to help him learn to put himself to sleep.
- Do not put your baby to sleep on a soft surface, such as a couch or pillow, and avoid co-sleeping to reduce the risk of suffocation.
- Put your baby to sleep on his back or side to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Lower the crib mattress before the baby can sit up by himself.

### Diet

- Babies continue to gain about ½ pound a week, or 2 pounds a month.
- The usual amount of formula for a 4-month-old infant in 24 hours is about 30 oz of formula per day, with a range of 26 to 36 oz.
- Your baby is now able to clearly show when she is hungry or full. It also is not unusual for babies to want different amounts of formula at different times of the day.
- At this age, your baby will indicate a desire for food by opening her mouth and leaning forward, and will indicate that he is full or doesn't want food by leaning back and turning away.
- Hold your baby for all bottle-feedings to reduce the risks of choking and to ensure that your baby gets enough of the formula. To reduce the risk of developing dental cavities, do not prop the bottle.
- Between 4 and 6 months of age, your baby will be ready to begin eating solid foods. Signs that your baby is ready to eat solids:
  - ✓ The tongue thrust reflex (pushing food out of the mouth) is disappearing
  - ✓ Your baby can raise his tongue to move pureed food to the back of the mouth
  - ✓ Your baby can open his mouth in anticipation as he sees a spoon approach
- Rice cereal is traditionally the first solid started. Start out with 2 teaspoons once a day and gradually increase until he is taking a total of 1/3 cup to 1/2 cup daily. This takes typically about a month.
- See 'Starting Solids' handout.
- Do not give your baby honey until after 1 year of age.
- Vitamin D- Lack of Vitamin D can cause rickets, or brittle bones. All breastfed babies need supplemental Vitamin D. Give 1 cc of Polyvisol or Trivisol every day.

### *Motor:*

- Push chest up to elbows
- Begin to roll from front to back
- Open and close his hands
- Reach for and bat at objects
- Bring objects to his mouth

- Fluoride- Usually your child needs no additional fluoride. Your child gets fluoride in tap water. Because the fluoride content of bottled water and well water varies, you should use tap water in mixing your child's formula, and for general drinking and cooking. Your child will get fluoride treatments at the dentist yearly, starting at 6 years of age.
- Iron- Usually iron drops are not necessary. Your child gets iron in breast milk and iron-fortified formula. Baby food started around 4-6 months of age is also a good source of iron

### Hygiene

- The first tooth usually appears sometime between 5-7 months. Drooling, irritability, and constant chewing on fingers or other objects are signs that teething is in progress. Teething rings or biscuits may provide some comfort for sore gums. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be given if sleep is disturbed or if your baby is very irritable or uncomfortable.
- Begin early dental care with the eruption of the first tooth. Use a soft toothbrush or cloth to clean your baby's teeth with water only. Your baby will visit the dentist for the first time when he is 3 years old.

### Stimulation

- Babies often put their hands in their mouth for chewing and sucking. This technique helps calm them, and they will use this method until they are able to use other self-calming strategies. Some parents think it means that their baby is still hungry, but it does not.
- Good games to play are "This Little Piggy," "Pat a Cake," and "Peek A Boo."

### Safety

- Keep your baby's car seat rear facing in the back seat of the vehicle until your baby is at least 1 year old and weighs at least 20 pounds.
- Always keep one hand on your baby when changing diapers or clothing on a changing table, couch, or bed, especially as she begins to roll over. Falls are the most common reason for emergency room visits for injury.
- Infant walkers should not be used by young children at any age. They are frequently associated with falls and can slow development of motor skills in children.
- Avoid holding your baby when you are cooking, drinking hot liquids, or smoking.
- A baby should not be left alone for even a second in a tub of water, even if using a bath ring or seat.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor, and change the batteries every 6 months.

### Health Maintenance

- Immunizations- See immunization handout.
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Please go to [www.vapg.com](http://www.vapg.com) and click on "Medicine Dosages" for correct dose of tylenol.
- Your baby's next check up is at 6 months age.