

Four-Month Visit

Congratulations, your baby is 4 months old and becoming more interactive and playful every day! The following are some tips to help you along.

Feeding and Nutrition

- At this age, your baby may feed less frequently (usually 4-7 times a day) but in larger amounts.
- A rule of thumb is that each day, babies take about 2 ½ ounces of formula per pound of their weight.
- Your baby will regulate their intake day to day to meet their own needs. Instead of going by fixed amounts, let your baby tell you when they have had enough (they may turn their head away or spit out the nipple when done).
- Only give your baby breast milk or formula. Babies this age don't need plain water or juice.
- Don't give your baby any honey until after age 1.
- Mix formula with faucet water (even if your baby doesn't have teeth yet). It has fluoride to keep teeth growing beneath the gums healthy.
- Don't put your baby to bed with a bottle or prop a bottle in the mouth.
- If your baby is breastfed only or taking less than 32 oz. of formula/day, they should continue taking a vitamin D supplement (400 IU/day).
- Spitting up is common and is not dangerous if your baby is acting well and gaining weight. This usually gets better around 6-9 months.

Starting Solids

- Breast milk or formula will continue to be a major source of your child's nutrition throughout the first 12 months.
- Most babies start solids between 4 to 6 months of age. What are signs of readiness to begin? Your baby should be able to hold their head up well, sit upright with support and show interest in what you are eating.
- You can start with 1-2 tablespoons of pureed vegetables, fruits or infant cereal mixed with breast milk or formula. To begin, make the mixture the consistency of soup and gradually prepare it thicker.
- **Don't put cereal or other baby food in a bottle.**
- Babies generally have a strong tongue thrust reflex, so don't be surprised if a lot of food ends up on the floor. It may take a few feeds before your baby figures out what to do.
- Give one new food at a time and wait 2-3 days before starting another to watch for any signs of an allergic reaction, such as rash, vomiting or diarrhea.
- After a few first foods have been tolerated, you can start some more allergenic foods (like peanut butter, eggs and fish). Discuss with your doctor first if your baby has eczema or there is a strong family history of food allergies.



Safety Tips

1. Do not put your baby inside a sitting infant walker that wheels around. They are dangerous and can delay walking.
2. Do not leave your baby alone (even for a few seconds) in bath water, in the car, on the bed, couch or changing table.
3. Secure your baby's car seat in the back seat facing the back window.
4. Minimize the risk of burn accidents to your baby: Do not smoke, drink hot liquids or cook while holding your baby.
5. Keep your home water heater set lower than 120°F/49°C.
6. Keep medicines, cleaning supplies, small or sharp objects, plastic bags, balloons, sockets and cords out of your baby's reach. If an object fits inside a toilet paper roll, your baby can choke on it.
7. Have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home. Change the batteries once a year.
8. Avoid direct sun exposure from 10 am-4pm when the sun is strongest. Use a wide brimmed hat. If shade isn't available, use mineral sunscreen on small areas, such as the face. Test it first on a small patch of skin.

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Four-Month Visit continued...

Sleeping

- At this age, babies may sleep for 8-12 hours at night and take 2-3 naps for an average of 15 hours of total sleep/day.
- Now is a good time to start a bedtime routine if you haven't already – this helps signal to your baby that it's time to go to sleep. You may want to dim the lights, read a book or sing to your baby.
- Place your baby in their crib when they become sleepy but still awake so they learn to self-soothe and fall asleep without your help.
- If your baby wakes up fussing at night, try waiting a few minutes before responding to see if they can soothe themselves back to sleep.
- Have your baby sleep in the same room as you for the first 6 months or later. Continue to place your baby on their back to sleep. If your baby is already rolling over, they may not stay on their back – this is okay.
- Stop swaddling or using a sleep sack that compresses the arms, chest and body when your baby shows signs of trying to roll over. Sleep sacks that allow free movement can be used indefinitely.
- Don't put loose, soft bedding, pillows, wedges or stuffed animals in the crib.

Development

Babies vary greatly in development. At this age, many babies will:

1. Start to engage you in “conversation.” Your baby may babble and pause to give you a chance to respond.
2. Begin to roll over and reach for objects.
3. Sit when propped up (not by themselves) and have better head and neck control.

Try these tips to help with development:

1. Talk and sing out loud to your baby. Repeat the sounds your baby makes back to them. Listen to music and dance with them. Play pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo.
2. Look at books with hard cardboard pages and bright pictures together. Babies under 18 months should not have screen time (TV/phone/tablet).
3. Continue “tummy time” on a firm surface several times a day. Aim for at least 20-30 minutes a day.
4. Give your baby soft and bright toys (rattles, balls and squeak toys) that make noise or move when touched.
5. Talk to your doctor if you have any concerns about your baby's development



Teething and Oral Care

Teething usually starts between 4-7 months, but timing is variable. It may cause mild fussiness, crying, low-grade fever and drooling. To help, gently massage your baby's gums or let them chew on a wet towel. Lidocaine gels are not recommended. Once teeth appear, brush them with a rice grain size of fluoride toothpaste using a soft baby toothbrush. To prevent tooth decay, never let your baby fall asleep with a bottle.

Immunizations (*vaccine schedule may vary slightly by practice)

Today: <i>Some vaccines may be combined</i>	Next Visit (at 6 months old)
• DtaP	• DtaP
• Hepatitis B (variable)	• Hepatitis B (variable)
• HIB	• HIB
• Pneumococcal	• Pneumococcal
• Polio	• Polio
• Rotavirus (oral)	• Rotavirus (oral)

Websites

- AAP Healthy Children: www.healthychildren.org (Health topics and news updates from the American Academy of Pediatrics)
- AAP Immunization Info: www.aap.org/immunization (Research-based information about childhood vaccines)

Your child's next routine visit is recommended at 6 months of age.

Important Numbers

- Poison Control
800-222-1222
- Parental Stress Line
800-632-8188
- Domestic Violence Help Line
617-724-0054 (HAVEN)
- Smoking Quit Line (free)
800-TRY TO STOP
- Your doctor's office