

Health and Wellness: 4 Months

Development

At this age, your baby may:

- raise his or her head high when lying on his or her stomach
- raise his or her body on the hands when lying on his or her stomach
- roll from his or her stomach to his or her back
- play with his or her hands and hold a rattle
- look at a mobile and move his or her hands
- start social contact by smiling, cooing, laughing and squealing
- cry when a parent moves out of sight
- recognize when a bottle is being prepared and be able to wait for it for a short time.

Feeding Tips

- Solid foods can be introduced when your baby is between 4 and 6 months old after talking with your baby's health care provider. If your baby doesn't seem satisfied with breastmilk or formula, you may give him or her rice cereal. Feeding your baby rice cereal will not likely affect sleeping patterns.
- Never prop up a bottle to feed your baby.
- Do not give your baby fruit juice on a regular basis. You may give your baby diluted prune juice for constipation.
- Give your baby 400 IU of a vitamin D supplement every day.

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- If you give your baby rice cereal, his or her stools may be less firm, occur less often, have a strong odor or become a different color.

Sleep

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in your room in a crib or bassinet (not in the same bed).
 - The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends sharing a bedroom for at least the first 6 months, or preferably until your baby turns 1.
 - Co-sleeping (sleeping in the same bed with your baby) is not recommended.
 - Don't let your baby sleep with a sibling.
- About 80 percent of 4-month-old babies sleep at least 5 to 6 hours in a row at night. If your baby doesn't, put him or her to bed while awake. Do not play with or have a lot of contact with your baby at bedtime.
- Your baby may not need to be fed if he or she wakes up during the night.

Safety

- Use an approved car seat for the height and weight of your baby every time he or she rides in a vehicle. The car seat must be properly secured in the back seat.
- According to state law, the car seat must be rear-facing (facing the rear window) until your baby is 20 pounds **and** 1 year old. Safety studies suggest that babies should be rear-facing until age 2.

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- Be a good role model for your baby. Do not talk or text on your cellphone while driving.
- Do not let anyone smoke in your house or car at any time.
- Never leave your baby alone, even for a few seconds. Your baby may be able to roll over. Take any safety precautions.
- Keep baby powders, cleaners and small objects out of the baby's reach at all times.
- Do not use infant walkers. They can cause serious accidents and serve no useful purpose. A better choice is an exersaucer.
- **Never shake or hit your baby.** If you are losing control, take a few deep breaths, put your child in a safe place and go into another room for a few minutes. If possible, have someone else watch your child so you can take a break. Call a friend, your local crisis nursery or First Call for Help at 651-291-0211 or dial 211.
- Keep your baby out of the sun. If you are outside, dress your baby in a hat, long-sleeved shirt and pants. Do not use sunscreen on your baby until he or she is 6 months old.

What Your Baby Needs

- Give your baby toys he or she can shake or bang. A toy that makes noise as it's moved increases your baby's awareness. He or she will repeat that activity.
- Sing rhythmic songs or nursery rhymes.
- Your baby may drool a lot or put objects into his or her mouth. Make sure your baby is safe from small or sharp objects.
- Read to your baby often. Set aside a few quiet minutes every day for sharing books together. This time should be free of television, texting and other distractions.

Dental Care

- Make regular dental appointments for cleanings and checkups starting at age 3 or earlier if there are questions or concerns. (Starting at the age of 6 months, your baby may need fluoride supplements if you have well water.)
- Clean your baby's mouth with a clean cloth or a soft toothbrush and water.

Immunizations (Shots) Today

Your child may receive these shots at this time:

- ☐ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
- ☐ HepB (hepatitis B)
- ☐ IPV (inactivated poliovirus vaccine)
- ☐ PCV13 (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, 13-valent)
- ☐ Hib (haemophilus influenzae type B)
- ☐ RV1 (rotavirus vaccine, oral).

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.

Your Baby's Next Well Checkup

Your baby's next well checkup will be at 6 months.

Your baby may need shots for:

- ☐ DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis)
- ☐ HepB (hepatitis B)
- ☐ IPV (inactivated poliovirus vaccine)
- ☐ PCV13 (pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, 13-valent),
- ☐ influenza.

Talk with your health care provider for information about giving acetaminophen (Tylenol®) before and after your baby's immunizations.