

YOUR 4 MONTH OLD INFANT

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT – MILESTONES:

BY 4 MONTHS OF AGE, IT IS COMMON FOR YOUR CHILD TO:

- Smile, laugh, and squeal
- Coo in response to your coos
- Bring hands together in front of chest
- Swipe and reach for objects
- Bring toy to mouth
- Have good head control when sitting
- Hold up head and chest, supporting themselves on arms, while on tummy
- Possibly roll from front to back

There's a wide range of what is normal and children develop at different rates. Talk to your Provider if you're concerned about your child's development.

NUTRITION / FEEDING:

Breast milk or formula is all an infant needs for the first 6 months, but some doctors recommend introducing iron-fortified rice cereal between 4-6 months. Talk with your Provider before starting any solids.

SLEEPING:

At this age, babies average about 15 hours of sleep, with 2 or 3 daytime naps. Most babies "sleep through the night" with a stretch of at least 6 hours of sleep. Some infants, particularly breastfed, may still wake at night but most no longer need a middle of the night feeding.

WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO:

Here are some things to keep in mind until your next routine visit at 6 months:

1. Breast milk or formula alone meets your infant's nutritional needs.
2. If your Provider recommends **introducing solids**:
 - a. Start with a small amount of iron-fortified rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula.
 - b. Use an infant spoon – do not put cereal in your baby's bottle.
 - c. If your baby is pushing a lot out with the tongue, he or she may not be ready for solids yet. Wait a week or so before trying again.
 - d. Wait until your baby successfully eats cereal from the spoon before trying other solids. Introduce one new food at a time and wait at least 3 days or so to watch for a possible allergic reaction before introducing another.
3. Do *not* give **juice** until after 6 months unless indicated by your Provider for some other purpose such as constipation or hydration concerns.

4. Do *not* prop bottles or put your baby to bed with a bottle.
5. Babies often begin **teething** around 4 months, though the first tooth usually doesn't appear until about 6-7 months. To help ease pain or discomfort, you may rub your baby's gums with a clean finger, offer a clean wet washcloth, or a teething toy to chew.
6. Your baby may begin **rolling over** around 4-6 months. Keep placing your baby to sleep on his or her back on a firm mattress in a crib without pillows or plush toys. At this time it's ok if your little one rolls over while sleeping.
7. **Remove mobiles and lower crib mattress** when your baby starts to push up to his or her hands and knees, or when your baby turns 5 months old – whichever comes first.
8. Continue to give your baby plenty of supervised "**tummy time**" when awake.
9. When bathing your baby, never leave him or her unattended. Always check the water temperature with your elbow first, and do not use bath seats with suction cups.
10. Always put your baby in a **rear-facing** car seat in the back seat.
11. If you haven't already, start child proofing your home. Get down on your hands and knees to look for potential dangers. Keep choking hazards, toxic substances (medicines, cleaning supplies, etc), and hot or sharp items out of reach.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR CHILD'S NEXT CHECK UP:

1. Check your baby's weight and length and plot on growth chart.
2. Perform physical examination.
3. Update immunizations.
4. Address concerns and offer advice.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR CHILD'S PROVIDER:
