

Well Baby Visit
4 Month Visit

Weight _____ Length _____

HABITS: This is perhaps the easiest age of a baby's life. There is still relative immunity to most infections, most colic has been outgrown, and the baby is happy to see and play with most everyone, but doesn't demand a lot of attention. Most are sleeping 6 to 10 hours in a stretch during the night, with 2 naps a day. This is a good time to be thinking in terms of a more regular schedule, especially around mealtimes and bedtimes.

FEEDING: Breast milk or iron-containing formula is still all that is needed. Most babies take 24 to 30 ounces per day at this age. As your baby seems hungrier over the next 2 months, introduce solid foods. Signs of readiness for solids include drinking over 40 ounces a day, waking up hungry during the night, and learning to swallow without pushing the food out instead. When you start with solids, go slowly, introducing only one new food every week or so. Begin with cereals, usually rice first, then oatmeal or barley. Baby cereals are fortified with a special form of iron that is easily digested, and should be continued until at least 1 year of age. Offer 1 or 2 tablespoons once or twice a day, depending on how hungry your baby is. Stage I fruits are next, then vegetables, especially the yellow ones (carrots, squash). Fruit juice may be offered occasionally between feedings, if your baby seems to need a little something, but it really is not nutritionally necessary. Start with apple or cherry, but avoid citrus and pineapple juices, which can cause diaper rashes.

DEVELOPMENT: Babies at this age enjoy being supported in an upright position and can sit with support. The head no longer falls back when being pulled up to sitting and it doesn't bob around so much when not supported. Babies tend to lie on their backs looking forward at this age, and often develop a bald spot on the back of the head. Your baby will now lift head and chest off the floor when prone, and can turn his head 90 degrees in both directions. Most will soon be rolling from front to back, and some from back to front. You have probably noticed your baby smiles more easily now, and squeals, chuckles, gurgles, and coos in response to sound. He or she knows your voice, and responds to it, and can distinguish between different people. Crying has decreased in general, but the baby may now protest when left alone. Babies of this age may be self-entertaining for a time. Cradle gyms with bright objects or brightly colored blocks scattered about on the floor may provide considerable enjoyment. Mirrors fascinate babies--you might place one safely out of reach outside the crib. Objects of medium size are interesting for your, baby, who can now reach for and grasp things within reach. Of course, everything in the hand ends up in the mouth eventually, so watch out for small objects! Continue to stimulate your baby's language development by talking and singing to him or her. Babies continue to thrive on attention and affection.

COMMON CONCERNS: Drooling is common at this age as saliva is produced in large quantities. It does not necessarily mean that the baby is teething, although the first teeth may be coming soon. Average age for the first tooth is 6 to 8 months, but some babies are earlier. Rubbing the gum with a clean finger or ice in a washcloth can decrease teething pain. Teething rings help. So may 0.8 ml (80 mg.) of acetaminophen drops every 4 hours. As babies learn to roll over, they may do so at night, become unhappy with the

new position, and need some help getting resettled. Until 6 months old or so, when babies are rolling easily both ways, sleeping on the back is recommended to minimize the risk of SIDS (crib death). Usually siblings have adjusted to this new person in the house, especially since the baby is more playful and responsive. Let's discuss any concerns you may have about this. Fevers over 102; that last more than 24 - 48 hours might be a sign of a significant illness at this age--call the office to let us know.

SAFETY: Be careful that very small or potentially harmful objects aren't within reach of the baby. The baby can't be left unattended for even a second on anything he might roll off of. Babies are experts at sliding out of or knocking over infant seats at this age. Car seats should be a regular part of car travel, and the baby should be riding facing the rear of the car in the back seat. Jolly Jumpers and 'Exer-saucers' are okay at this age, but walkers increase the baby's mobility and may expose them to safety hazards such as falling down the stairs. Now that your baby is more active, bath time can be a challenge, as you are dealing with a squirmy, soapy, slippery bundle of joy. Of course, never leave a baby or young child unattended near the water for an instant!

IMMUNIZATIONS: The second set of immunizations against polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, and meningitis are given today. The baby may get a fever, which can be treated with 0.8 ml (80 mg.), of acetaminophen (Liquiprin, Temptra, Tylenol, etc.) drops every 4 hours. Local redness and swelling can be treated with cold soaks.