
ANTICIPATORY GUIDANCE

4 Months

Date: _____ Height: _____ Weight: _____ OFC: _____

The 4-month-old infant is beginning to settle in by establishing regular sleeping and feeding cycles. He or she is also showing endless interest in his or her environment. The following comments are designed to help you and your partner enjoy your 4-month-old while continuing to gain confidence in yourselves as parents. Never hesitate to ask for guidance concerning specific problems. This is the reason for regular well- baby checkups.

Parenting and Behavioral

- This is an enjoyable time for you and your baby. They are more fun and less work. They are exploring more and trying to make contact with his surroundings.
- Continue to hold, cuddle, talk to, sing to, and rock your baby as much as you can. Every interaction stimulates brain development. They need an interested audience and a chance to use their laughing skills.
- Now is the time to think about getting your baby a playpen and some suitable toys to keep them entertained.
- Read brightly colored books to your baby. Reading is important to succeed as an adult and you cannot start too early.
- Since the 4-month-old infant is more active, spitting up is common at this age, so have a good supply of absorbent bibs to protect your baby's skin and clothing from being constantly wet.
- It is important for parents to keep in contact with friends and family to avoid social isolation.
- Start looking for a good baby-sitter if you haven't already.

Development

- A baby's development proceeds in a head to foot direction. At this age, the typical child can hold her head high and raise the body on his or her hands while lying on his stomach.
- The 4-month-old baby keeps their hands open while at rest. They will play with their hands, bat at mobiles, and reach for rattles. Any object they hold goes directly into their mouth.
- Most babies this age will show a clear preference for parents and other caregivers. They will turn toward a sound and recognize

their parents' voices. Four-month-old infants babble, smile, laugh and squeal.

- The 4-month-old baby also begins to learn cause and effect. They shake a rattle and it makes noise, you wind the mobile and it begins to move, etc.

Feeding

- Feeding times may become interesting! Your baby will begin responding to all the sights and sounds of their environment. Frequently, the baby may become so interested in their world that he may refuse to settle down to eat. They will take a few swallows of formula or breast milk and then stop to see what is going on in the room.
- Nutritionally, the only thing your baby needs until 6 months of age is breast milk or formula. Addition of other foods should be discussed with your pediatrician.
- Breast-fed babies should continue the Tri-Vi-Sol vitamins until either taking 17oz. of supplemental formula per day or switching to whole milk at one year of age.
- Between now and the next checkup, many babies begin to drool. This is quite common and does not necessarily indicate early teething. It is probably due to a lot of saliva that the baby has not yet learned to swallow.

Sleep

- Always put your baby to sleep on their back. Alternate the end of the crib where you place their head so your baby does not always sleep with their head on one side. If you wake up and find your baby has rolled over onto her stomach, don't panic. If the child can roll over, they are at a reduced risk for SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

- Encourage your baby to console themselves by putting them to bed awake. Teach your 4-month-old self-soothing techniques by providing them with a transition object, such as a stuffed animal, blanket, or favorite toy.
- Keep an established bedtime routine to discourage night awakening.

Immunizations

Your baby will receive the following immunizations at this visit:

- Pediarix #2
- Hemophilus Influenza Type b (Hib) Vaccine #2
- Prevnar #2

Household contacts should receive the flu vaccine during flu season.

Safety

- Now that your baby is more active, parents need to be more careful than ever not to leave the child anywhere from which she can fall. Always keep one hand on the baby and never turn your back, for even a second, when you put your infant on a sofa, bed, changing table, or any other high place. Your baby demands your full attention.

- Continue to use an infant car seat that is rear facing and properly secured at all times.
- If your home uses gas appliances, install and maintain carbon monoxide detectors.
- Continue to keep the baby's environment free of tobacco smoke. Keep the home and car non-smoking zones.
- Do not drink hot liquids or smoke while holding the baby.
- Remember, everything a 4-month-old holds goes in their mouth, so keep toys with small parts out of reach. Warn siblings to keep these objects away from their little baby brother or sister too.
- Do not use an infant walker at any age. Walkers are dangerous and have been shown in studies to actually slow down the process of learning to walk.

When to Call the Doctor

- Not gaining weight.
- Your baby seems stiff or floppy.
- Becomes totally uninterested in eating.
- Your baby cannot hold a rattle or doesn't babble.
- Eyes are crossed most of the time.
- You have not seen any developmental changes since the last checkup.

Resources

- Poison Control 1-800-222-1222
- American Academy of Pediatrics www.aap.org
 - www.kidsgrowth.com
 - www.paalex.com

This information is for educational purposes only and it should be used only as a guide.