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## Well Child Care at 4 Months

### Feeding

Your baby should still be taking breast milk or infant formula. Most babies now take about 6 to 7 ounces every 4 to 5 hours. You can start juice at the age of 4 to 6 months but should limit it to a few ounces each day.

If you give your baby breast milk, it is a good idea to sometimes feed your baby with pumped milk that you put in a bottle. Then your baby will learn another way to drink milk and other people can enjoy feeding your baby.

Some babies are now ready to start cereal. A baby is ready for cereal when he is able to hold his head up enough to eat from a spoon. Use a spoon to feed your baby cereal, not a bottle or an infant feeder. Sitting up while eating helps your baby learn good eating habits. When you start cereal, start with rice cereal mixed with breast milk or formula. You may want to start with a thin mix of cereal and then thicken it gradually.

Pureed fruits and vegetables can also be started between 4 and 6 months. Start a new food or juice no more often than every 5 days to make sure your baby is not allergic to the new food.

Babies will respond gleefully when they see a bottle, but don't give your baby a bottle just to quiet him when he really isn't hungry. Babies who spend too much time with a bottle in their mouth start to use the bottle as a security object, which makes weaning more difficult. They are also more likely to have ear infections and tooth decay problems. Find another security object like a stuffed animal or a blanket.

### Development

Babies are starting to roll over from stomach to back. Your baby's voice may become louder. He may squeal when happy or cry when he wants food or to be held. In both cases, gentle, soothing voices are the best way to calm your baby. Babies at this age enjoy toys that make noise when shaken.

It is normal for babies to cry. At this age you can't spoil a baby. Meeting your baby's needs quickly is still a good idea.

## **Sleep**

Many babies are sleeping through the night by 4 months of age and will also nap 4 to 6 hours during the daytime. If your baby's sleeping patterns are different than this you may want to ask your doctor for ideas about ways to keep your baby alert and awake during the day and sound asleep at night. Remember to place your baby in bed on her back.

## **Reading and Electronic Media**

As the baby gets older, read to her every day. Choose books that are durable (cloth or board books). Pick books with bright colors and large simple pictures.

## **Teething**

Your baby may begin teething. While getting teeth, your baby may drool and chew a lot. A teething ring may be useful.

## **Safety Tips**

### **Choking and Suffocation**

- Remove hanging mobiles or toys before the baby can reach them.
- Keep cords, ropes, or strings away from your baby, especially near the crib. Ropes and strings around the baby's neck can choke him.
- Keep plastic bags and balloons out of reach.
- Use only unbreakable toys without sharp edges or small parts that can come loose.

### **Fires and Burns**

- Never eat, drink, or carry anything hot near the baby or while you are holding the baby.
- Turn down your water heater to 120°F (50°C).
- Check your smoke detectors to make sure they work.
- Check formula temperature carefully. Formula should be warm or cool to the touch.

### **Falls**

- Never leave the baby alone on a high place.
- Keep crib and playpen sides up.
- Do not put your baby in a walker.

### **Car Safety**

- Use an approved infant car seat correctly in the back seat.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car.
- Wear your safety belt.

## **Smoking**

- Children who live in a house where someone smokes have more respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke-free home.
- If you smoke, set a quit date and stop. Set a good example for your child. If you cannot quit, do NOT smoke in the house or near children.

## **Immunizations**

At the 4-month visit, your baby should have a:

- DTaP (diphtheria, acellular pertussis, tetanus) shot
- Hib (Haemophilus influenza type B) shot
- polio shot
- pneumococcal (PCV) shot
- rotavirus oral vaccine.

Some babies also receive a hepatitis B shot at this age.

Some of these vaccines can be combined in the same shot, so your baby may not have to have 4 or 5 separate shots.

Your baby may run a fever and be irritable for about 1 day after the shots. Your baby may also have some soreness, redness, and swelling where the shots were given.

You may give acetaminophen drops in the appropriate dose to prevent the fever and irritability. For swelling or soreness, put a wet, warm washcloth on the area of the shots as often and as long as needed for comfort.

Call your child's healthcare provider if:

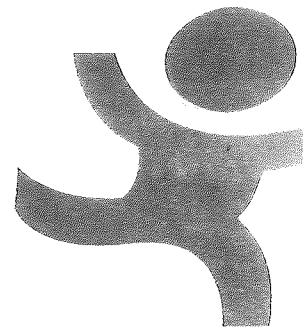
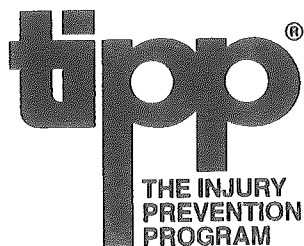
- Your child has a rash or any reaction other than fever and mild irritability.
- Your child has a fever that lasts more than 36 hours.

## **Next Visit**

Your baby's next routine visit should be at the age of 6 months. At this time your child will get the next set of immunizations. Bring your child's shot card to all visits.

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# Birth to 6 Months



## BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS

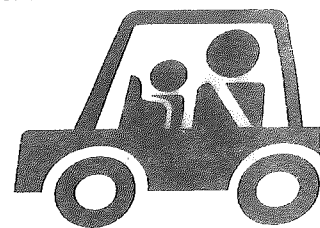
### Safety for Your Child

Did you know that hundreds of children younger than 1 year die every year in the United States because of injuries — most of which could be prevented?

Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do. Children *learn fast*, and before you know it, your child will be *wiggling* off a bed or *reaching* for your cup of hot coffee.

#### Car Injuries

**Car crashes** are a great threat to your child's life and health. Most injuries and deaths from car crashes can be prevented by the use of car safety seats. Your child, besides being much safer in a car safety seat, will behave better, so you can pay attention to your driving. Make your newborn's first ride home from the hospital a safe one — in a car safety seat. Your infant should ride in the back seat in a rear-facing car seat.

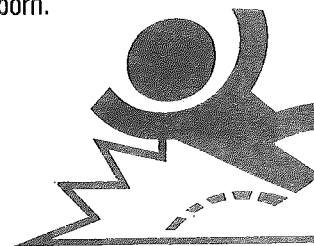


**Make certain that your baby's car safety seat is installed correctly. Read and follow the instructions that come with the car safety seat and the sections in the owners' manual of your car on using car safety seats correctly. Use the car safety seat EVERY time your child is in the car.**

**NEVER** put an infant in the front seat of a car with a passenger air bag.

#### Falls

Babies *wiggle* and *move* and *push* against things with their feet soon after they are born. Even these very first movements can result in a fall. As your baby grows and is able to roll over, he or she may fall off of things unless protected. **Do not leave your baby alone** on changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. **Put your baby in a safe place** such as a crib or playpen when you cannot hold him.



Your baby may be able to crawl as early as 6 months. **Use gates on stairways and close doors** to keep your baby out of rooms where he or she might get hurt. **Install operable window guards** on all windows above the first floor.

**Do not use a baby walker.** Your baby may tip the walker over, fall out of it, or fall down stairs and seriously injure his head. Baby walkers let children get to places where they can pull heavy objects or hot food on themselves.

**If your child has a serious fall or does not act normally after a fall, call your doctor.**

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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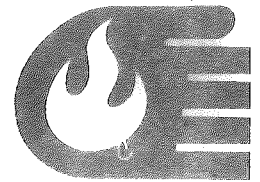


## Burns

At 3 to 5 months, babies will wave their fists and grab at things. **NEVER** carry your baby and hot liquids, such as coffee, or foods at the same time. Your baby can get burned. You can't handle both! To protect your child from tap water scalds, the hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F. In many cases you can adjust your water heater.

**If your baby gets burned, immediately put the burned area in cold water. Keep the burned area in cold water for a few minutes to cool it off. Then cover the burn loosely with a dry bandage or clean cloth and call your doctor.**

To protect your baby from house fires, be sure you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, especially in furnace and sleeping areas. Test the alarms every month. It is best to use smoke alarms that use long-life batteries, but if you do not, change the batteries at least once a year.

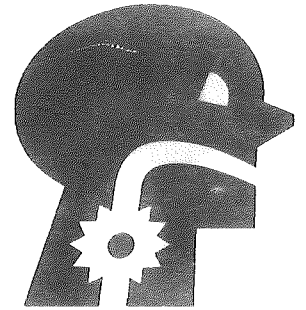


## Choking and Suffocation

Babies explore their environment by putting anything and everything into their mouths. **NEVER** leave small objects in your baby's reach, even for a moment. **NEVER** feed your baby hard pieces of food such as chunks of raw carrots, apples, hot dogs, grapes, peanuts, and popcorn. Cut all the foods you feed your baby into thin pieces to prevent choking. **Be prepared if your baby starts to choke. Ask your doctor to recommend the steps you need to know. Learn how to save the life of a choking child.**

To prevent possible suffocation and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), **your baby should always sleep on his or her back. NEVER** put your baby on a water bed, bean bag, or anything that is soft enough to cover the face and block air to the nose and mouth.

**Plastic wrappers and bags form a tight seal if placed over the mouth and nose and may suffocate your child. Keep them away from your baby.**



### From Your Doctor

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The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.