

Mendon Pediatrics

4 Month Visit

Next Visit: 6 Months

Nutrition

- Continue to breast or formula feed, usually 4-6 times a day.
- Give your breastfed infant 400 I.U.'s of vitamin D daily (found in store as Polyvisol or Trivisol 1ml dropper).
- Four to six months old is a good age to begin solids. Most physicians recommend starting with rice cereal, then introducing a new fruit or vegetable once or twice a week. Physicians may differ with one another on the timing and order of introducing the various foods, since there is little scientific evidence that one system of feeding is better than any other.
- Avoid honey until after your child's first birthday. Avoid yogurts and ice cream until 9 months old.
- Do not give your infant honey until after his/her first birthday to prevent infant botulism.
- Juice is not a substitute for breast milk or formula. Try not to place juice in a bottle, it will increase your baby's risk of cavities.
- It is not necessary to give your baby water at this age.

Sleep

- Begin to establish a regular schedule for naps (2-3 a day) and bedtime. Work at putting your baby in the crib awake, ready to fall asleep on his/her own.
- Many babies can sleep all night at this age (8-10 hours).
- Continue back and/or side sleeping. Consider switching your baby's position end for end to avoid head flattening.

Healthy Habits

- Use an infant car seat, rear facing until one year old.
- Avoid falls:
 - Rolling off the couch or bed.
 - Pitching forward out of the infant seat (belt them in).
 - Falling down the steps in a walker.
- Exersaucers and other stationary-type seats are okay if the baby can support his/her body in an upright position. These should be used with supervision. **Walkers are not safe.** They are dangerous near stairs that your child can tumble down. Even without having stairs in the house, your child can fall over in the walker and get arm fractures and head injuries.
- Continue tummy time to strengthen your baby's muscles.
- Keep small objects out of reach. Remember that their hands go quickly to the mouth. Ask us about first aid for choking infant and consider taking a CPR course.
- Avoid exposure to tobacco smoke. Keep anywhere that your child spends time smoke free, such as the home, the babysitter's and the car.
- Use smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide testers and make sure they work properly.
- A small amount of sun exposure (15 minutes a day) is important for breast-fed infants (to get vitamin D). Avoid prolonged sun and bright mid-day sun if possible.
- Poison control can be reached at **1-800-222-1222**.

Developmental Milestones: Over the next couple of months your child will start to:

- When on stomach, lift head up 90 degrees.
- Roll over (front to back, then back to front).

- Sit with support.
- Grasp a rattle.
- Reach for objects.
- Develop full color vision.
- Laugh out loud. May smile back when you smile.
- Make raspberries (a wet razzing sound).
- Say "ah-goo" or similar vowel-consonant combinations.
- Turn head in direction of voice.
- Explore with hands and mouth.

Appropriate toys and activities

- An unbreakable mirror in crib or over changing table.
- Soft balls and textured toys, including some that make soft, pleasant sounds.
- Musical toys such as bells, maracas and tamborines (make sure none of the parts can become loose.)
- Continue to sing interactive songs such as patty cake.
- See-through rattles that show the pieces making noise.
- Old magazines with bright pictures for you to show him/her.
- Baby books with board, cloth or vinyl pages. Read to your infant at least once a day to foster language skills.

Suggested Reading

The First Three Years of Life, Burton White

The Magic Years, Selma Fraiberg

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, American Academy of Pediatrics

Infants and Mothers, T. Berry Brazelton

Your Baby and Child, From Birth to Age Five, P. Leach

Baby and Child Care, B. Spock

Guide to Your Child's Symptoms, American Academy of Pediatrics

Sleeping Through the Night, Jodi Mindell, Ph.D

Children are never too young to be read to!